

Business of Civil War

New Forms of Life in the Debris of
the Democratic Republic of Congo

Patience Kabamba

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Democratic Republic of Congo

Patience Kabamba



CODESRIA

Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
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A popular painting that is often seen in homes in the Congo depicts a man who is approached by a lion while he is cutting down a tree at the edge of a river. Climbing the nearly severed tree to escape, he encounters a python in the branches above him. Turning to jump into the river, he is confronted by a crocodile. He remains caught in a precarious situation with danger lurking on all sides and, seemingly, without a means of escape. He has lost hold of his rifle which is his best means of defense against these ferocious predators. The only words he could pronounce are: "*Biliaki Ngai Bikoki*" (I am finished! I am blocked! There is no way out for me!).

The message in this painting is poignant: life for most people in Africa continues to be a daily struggle for survival; competition in the struggle for upward mobility has become intense with dwindling, inflation-eroded rewards for success. And the state itself becomes more meddlesome and exploitative, giving far little return on taxes and licensing fees, and making life generally unbearable for the masses. Independence from colonialism is sometimes referred to as being “*Undanganifu mukuu*” (Great Depression) (Nelson 1992). But what is remarkable, however, is the people’s persistence, doggedness, hope – even ambition; and I find this most evident in the education and commercial sectors where they toil daily with a view to improving their lot. Their indomitable spirit is an inspiration and a sure evidence that we are not at a standstill.

Preface

Not too far from V. S. Naipaul's *Bend in the River* there lies a small but rapidly growing city called Butembu. A city of perhaps 600,000 inhabitants, which figures in a few novels or poems in many languages. Patience Kabamba takes us in this book precisely to Butembu where he has conducted intensive fieldwork. A Swahili speaker and Congolese native, he is well able to communicate with any informant there and make their concerns come to life. He was obviously able to establish relations of trust with important Butembu residents and major commercial figures although these relations were not always smooth and at one time he experienced, and fortunately survived unscathed, an assault at gunpoint.

What he has found is something that takes debates on African society and politics today somewhat further into uncharted territory. Kabamba has little time for assessments of Africa, even the trouble-ridden Democratic Republic of the Congo, that focus on archaic Africa coming back into its darkest own, the so-called Afro-pessimists. However and probably more importantly, he is equally hard on the champions of so-called good governance who try to impose a rationalising outsider's dictate on this unruly continent. Instead of woefully comparing the Congo to the nostrums proposed by USAID, the World Bank, the WTO or other aligned organisations, he tries instead to present us with a dynamic, changing picture of the real central Africa as it looks early in the twenty-first century. Much current literature on Africa today focuses simply on poverty, on giving voice – and charity – to the dispossessed in what seems at times to be a call for a giant social work project. Here, we have rather by implication a call to integrate such literature with a broader understanding of class and politics.

Butembu, his site of research, is a relatively peaceful and orderly city which serves as a kind of giant warehouse of imported goods. In Butembu, you can find rich businessmen who have played their role in financing the violent struggles that have beset the Congo in the last decade. Here, in what was a small mining town in Belgian times, a city has arisen that is genuinely post-colonial and genuinely attuned to the effective networks of globalisation about which so much is written. There is inequality and vice in Butembu despite the prevalence of an acquisition-driven work ethic and the prominence of Christian forces aimed at creating

social stability, of course, and it hardly measures up to the ecologically friendly model city that sits in the dreams of an international avant-garde. It must remain thin on the many kinds of institutions that make for a better life in the kind of cities most of us admire. But neither is it Monrovia or Mogadishu.

Kabamba puts especial weight on the dominant role of a hitherto obscure ethnic group, the Nande, who were a relative failure in colonial times, poor, neglected by the main thrust of development and Christianised by minority Protestants. It is the Nande who by stages have become *par excellence* the merchants of the heart of Africa, using ethnic networks to promote security and create communications possibilities, living off conflict, sometimes provoking it, but also finding a road to prosperity and accumulation in the eye of the storm. Here are people, one might say, who have their feet firmly grounded in today's Africa and who know how to make the best of it. And it is their dominance of Butembu which allows it to flourish.

Butembu exists because the Congolese state has become so weak since the 1970s, and Kabamba pens his remarks from the vantage point of this peripheral city rather than the centre of that state, now or before. In this part of the Congo, the predatory officials and soldiers have played their cards badly and for some time have not been very successful. This is an African community that thrives on the basis of the decayed post-modern fragile state whose many sins have been written up repeatedly by commentators and scholars. However, it is not a state that does not exist at all. For example, Butembu examinations are recognised by the Congolese government as legitimate steps towards degrees and diplomas. The relationship within the state and between state and society is far more subtle and complicated than state vs. market debates allow for. Moreover, if the average Nande trader fears the establishment of a more effective state in the future in the Congo, the richest and most sophisticated now welcome the new possibilities that this would offer.

It is however true that this is hardly a situation where an enabling state allows processes of accumulation and social uplift to go forward effectively beyond a certain point. Even if we take the strictly economic sphere, while Butembu seems to be moving towards improving its air links with the outer world and regularising its electric supply, as Kabamba says, the beginnings of industrialisation, of a real economic take-off, are still not there. It is likely that Butembu will sooner or later be incorporated into a DRC that is somewhat more functional than the present one; whether it and whether the Nande and their current situation will benefit from incorporation remains to be seen. Nonetheless, it is fascinating to see ambitious traders, in my view not really yet capitalists in the sense of either Weber or Marx, beginning to forge a vision to turn themselves into producing capitalists. They have a very different outlook than the "natural" elite of the

Congo, those created by years of sitting behind desks at formal educational institutions marked largely by the quality of their French, their articulate manipulation of language and their knowledge of selected consumer products for display. They are also most unlike the chiefs, the “traditional” who regulated day-to-day life in rural areas in colonial time and, in other situations in Africa, have made something of a comeback.

Kabamba’s theoretical readings are very wide-ranging. References to the historical writing of the late sociologist Charles Tilly or the classic study of Hobbes, take us back to comparisons with early modern Europe and before. The sovereignty of city-states and principalities then went “naturally” hand in hand with some recognition of the over-rule of a Holy Roman Emperor or Pope. The terms by which an effective state could form varied enormously and were contingent on many factors. The nascent Nande state-form in Butembu does not obviate the writ, weak as it may be at present, of the Kinshasa national regime entirely. Both are forms in motion; both fail as well as succeed in their ambitions and they are capable of coming together as well as conflicting. As Machiavelli makes so clear, violence, aggression, the direct face of power and, above all, war, were a major part in construction as well as destruction of the crucial economic and political linkages that mattered in the West during a formative era. From William the Conqueror through Gustavus Vasa and George Washington all the way to Cavour, Bismarck and beyond, the emergence of today’s effective and strong states is unimaginable without a history, if perhaps a distant history, of violence and war. Good governance had little to do with it. In the extremely politically complex world of the lush eastern Congo, some of these historical factors seem to re-emerge and these classic references offer us more enlightenment than the latest formulae of political scientists who take for granted the kind of state theorists such as Giorgio Agamben, discussed also in these pages, try to explore in depth.

There are other kinds of cities in the Congo. Lubumbashi, the second (or third largest) where the most important mining enterprises of all can be found, is now experiencing a more dynamic and autonomous provincial government than anywhere else in the country with some beneficial results, but this of course is apt to make central government authorities uneasy. It vies in size with the diamond centre of Mbuji Mayi, a kind of forerunner of Butembu but, Patience Kabamba tells me, is less dynamic and prosperous apparently today than a decade ago. Kinshasa, the very much larger capital city of the country, is by contrast still very much weighted down with the devastation of the past, the in-migration of large numbers of peasants to a centre which has offered some security and some basic access to health and education, but limited productive economic activity and the unshakeable link to the political centre and the values that emanate from it, rather than ‘illegal’ forces that pull away from that centre.

In the difficult circumstances of the DRC, it is Butembu that makes the gathering emergence of a new African society a bit clearer. Elsewhere in more prosperous cities and stabler countries, for instance, Dar es Salaam or Luanda, Accra or Dakar, a gradual transformation at the hands of an emergent ruling class where money-making is tied to international links and state contacts is visible, but it is not always so starkly demarcated amidst the extensive continuities with the past from which there has been no violent break. This is an Africa that is slowly divesting itself of the neo-colonial links which seemed dominant in the years after independence. The great value of this study is its perceptiveness at beginning to identify the direction towards which Africa really is moving. The horrors of war in the eastern Congo may be blocking what we wish to think of as “development”, but they might also be speeding these processes along.

Bill Freund

Durban, South Africa

1

Introduction

In *The Mission Song* (2007), John Le Carré writes: “If one were patrolling the globe in search of great problems to address, the DRC – known for a period (1971-1997) as Zaire and sometimes as Congo-Kinshasa – would be the logical first stop.” At the beginning of the novel, Maxie, the protagonist declares:

Congo’s been bleeding to death for five centuries. Fucked by the Arab slaves, fucked by their fellow Africans, fucked by the United Nations, the CIA, the Christians, the Belgians, the French, the Brits, the Rwandans, diamond companies, the mineral companies, half the world’s carpetbaggers, their own government in Kinshasa, and any minute now they are going to be fucked by the oil companies. Times they had a break, and we’re the boys to give it to’em (p.137).

Maxie’s pungent summary of the country does not even include the fact that between 1998 and 2003, the Congo was the battlefield for what is sometimes called “Africa’s World War One”- a conflict that pulled in many neighbouring armies and left an estimated 4 million people dead. After an excruciating colonial period under the Belgians, the Congo, a nation nearly the size of Western Europe, suffered the severe decline of its social and economic infrastructure. Since achieving independence in 1960, major public systems – health, education, transportation, commerce – have deteriorated on a scale that defies comprehension. Certainly, statistics cannot capture the extent. The postcolonial decline resulted in the outbreak of a civil war. Both Congolese and foreign armed groups, answerable to no law, preyed on the civilian population, and on one another.

Given this vast canvas, Le Carré wisely limits himself, in *The Mission Song*, to one small but particularly salient area of the Congo, the Kivus, and only to a few contending groups. North Kivu and South Kivu have been at the heart of some of the worst violence in the country. The two provinces sit on the western shores of Lake Kivu, one of the most beautiful African Great Lakes, and at the Rwandan border. In the aftermath of civil wars in Burundi and Rwanda, refugees, victims of genocide, and their pursuers flooded the region. The catastrophic war in the

Congo which started in 1998 began with the Kivus. Many international corporations and governments, and all of Congo's eastern neighbours, remain deeply interested in the mineral wealth and tangled politics of the Kivus. Rwanda's influence is particularly strong in the vacuum created by the distance of the hapless Congolese government in Kinshasa, a thousand roadless miles away.

Map of the Democratic Republic of the Congo



The body of literature on contemporary studies of Africa has tried to understand and conceptualise the role of imperial power in the construction of order and authority in post-colonial states (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Young 1994; Mamdani 1996). There is, however, a lack of research on the transnational and cross-border production of social order and political economic management in this post-colonial period. This book has sought to address this omission by examining the transnational “local”, ethnic communities and the emergence of new forms of life in the debris of the post-colonial state. This book grew out of a desire to move beyond emergency responses to African situations, and engage in a long reflection on African post-colonial institutions.

Map of North Kivu Province



Amidst a pervasive “Afro pessimism”, I wanted to examine what was “working well” in Africa and why it was working. Then, I decided to pay a deeper attention to the reputation of a group of traders in the North Kivu Province of DRC the Nande who were prosperous in the region for more than three decades despite incremental changes within the country. Moreover, the intellectual hegemony of the discourses on state failure and state collapse made it difficult to focus on the non-failed part of the state, which is the capacity of African societies to think their futures in new contexts. Here, the flexibility of human social relations shows once again the limits of the inflexibility of institutions; out of the debris of the state, new forms of life have emerged of which I wanted to be a “*griot*”.¹

This work seeks to understand how, in the absence of effective state sovereignty and in the presence of numerous armed contenders for power, Nande traders have managed to build and protect self-sustaining, prosperous, transnational

economic enterprises in eastern Congo. The object of the book is the specific social arrangement that traders had using kinship and ethnic ideologies, and practices of “Nande-ness” – an ensemble of social relations, in which human productive powers and creative capacities are paramount. The work addresses the commercial enterprises of the Nande trust networks and the subsequent transnational community produced, by challenging the assumption that a weak state or a failed state or even a collapsed state is a failed society.

The assumption (from Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau, *et al.*) is that selfishness reigns in a failed state; thus, the “failed state” adversely affects the lives of all who continue to believe in its aegis, and its weakness ensures their suffering. Any attempt to circumvent the system is regarded as corrupt; criminal acts from which only a few will benefit. Inseparably linked to the sociopolitical model of the state is the economy. A strong state survives because it can regulate production, trade, and profit (through taxation, etc.), thus sustaining itself (and the society as a whole). Thus, when a state is politically and economically unstable, weak, or absent, it is assumed that all will suffer. The informal economy is particularly irksome because it operates outside state (and taxation) structures. As a symptom of the state’s weakness, therefore, a thriving informal economy is equated with the poor health of the society at large.

Within the territories of Beni and Lubero, the impact state is weak (even absent). The Nande, however, have thrived in this context. To call their actions “corrupt”, is to have a one-dimensional view of a very complex picture with a complicated history. Ironically, the Nande traders were rich, yet the entire area prospered. They amassed wealth, and fed it back into the community, such the territories were among the few in the Congo with a flourishing economy, decent schools, and health care. They did not rely on the nation’s ports. Rather, they had strong ties with the Middle East and East Asia.

However, beginning in the mid to late 1990s, after the fall of the Mobutu dictatorship, the Nande ‘model’ became significantly altered by the sobering realities of deep complicity with militia violence, and the warfare that raged on the border. The Nande form of social organisation – market relations maintained through ethnic hierarchy and network clientilism – had, in effect, become its own neo-liberal version of the older Mobutu predatory state. This transformation becomes especially clear once we recognise the deep complicity of the most powerful Nande traders with, and even responsibility for the predation of the militias operating at the periphery of the region.

As conflicts between ethnic communities are devastating to the larger population, even a weak state might be seen as a means to secure some semblance of peace and avoid a civil war. However, if there is indeed a normative liberalism that pervades these dominant discourses about the ostensible virtues of the state,

one must carefully avoid falling into the trap of positing a simplified communitarian argument. Mobutu's predatory and thieving state exploited communitarian identities to serve himself and his clique.

This book does *not* suggest that Nande communitarianism is an alternative to the incapacities of the post-colonial state to secure peace and liberalism. On the contrary, the submission is that a neoliberal utopian vision – like the supposedly self-governing and market-driven Nande networks – presents itself only falsely as a panacea. It would be misleading to hold up the Nande model as a cheerful neoliberal one, whereas its purportedly self-governing network forms of organisation, pursues its own interests and magically produces the greatest good for the greatest number.

In a global order in which civil war disrupts capital accumulation, and therefore must ultimately be contained – even if it may have provided some extraordinary occasions in the short-term for what Harvey (2005) calls “accumulation by dispossession” – a more pragmatic neo-liberalism is being imposed on the peoples of the DRC to ensure the survival of the very large, extant, post-colonial regional (nation) state, against disintegration and dissolution. In this context, the Nande presented themselves as the proponents of peaceful capitalist development while also reinforcing and abetting the conflict they seemed to deplore. As the experience of the Kivus reveal, local war is bad for business (local or global) except to the extent that it can be profitably managed. In this respect, this thesis has implications for the Great Lakes regional political economy, encompassing the DRC's eastern neighbours - Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda – and for the study of international political economy more generally. At the heart of this inquiry into the political economy of civil war, however, is a transnational production of “local” communal and “ethnic” solidarity in the debris of the post-colonial state.

Nande prosperity during the bloodiest African civil war on record

Located in the territory of Lubero in North Kivu Province, Butembo, a city of 600,000 inhabitants, is 135 km from the Ugandan border (Kasindi), 600 km from Ugandan capital, Kampala, 350 km from Goma, the administrative centre of North Kivu province, 900 km from Kisangani the capital city of the Oriental Province, and 2,000 km from Kinshasa the capital of the DRC. The population of Butembo is 90 per cent Nande. Today, Butembo is like a warehouse for merchandise coming from faraway Dubai, Taipei, Hong Kong, Djakarta, Gouazoug (China), etc.

When I arrived in Butembo² in August 2005, there was a strange atmosphere of peace and security on the Lubero-Beni axis in which Butembo is centrally located. To the north of the Lubero-Beni axis is the Ituri Region with its well documented troubles and massacres.³ To the south are the remaining territories of the North Kivu Province, including Masisi, Walikali and Rutshuru. These three

territories were home to many armed groups. The dissident General Nkundabatware was based in Masisi with 2,000 armed militia men; Rutshuru was dominated by the presence of the Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda (FDLR)⁴, and Walikali is still marred by ethnic tensions between Hunde and residents of Rwandan origin. At the centre of the troubled North Kivu region and neighbouring Ituri, Butembo was truly a safe haven.

The impression of generalised security was reinforced by the apparent security of commodity trading. Butembo is a veritable warehouse where hundreds of tons of merchandise are stored. From interviews and observations, I concluded that through persistent enterprise and occasional communication with other (non-Nande) traders, the Nande slowly developed business alliances and friendly relations that sometimes resemble an enduring sense of “family”. Regardless of peace or war, Nande traders had the financial capital and trust to borrow containers of goods from traders in Dubai, Hong Kong or Taipei, sell them in the region, and return the initial investment as hard currency to the owners⁵. Nande traders were able to create such an extensive transnational environment of trust and partnership partly because of their homogeneous ethnicity and kinship.

The homogeneity of the population, and especially the trading community, is striking in Butembo. Out of hundreds of small and big businessmen, only one was not a Nande. This homogeneity helped to insulate the entire Nande group from the civil war in the surrounding country.

The war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had a devastating effect on the population. From a humanitarian point of view, the Congolese conflict caused levels of suffering unparalleled in any recent war. As at 2006, out of a population of 58 million people, as many as 4 million had died⁶, 7 million suffered from malnutrition, 3 million were HIV positive, at least 40,000 had been victims of sexual violence, 2.4 million were internally displaced, 880,000 had become refugees, and 3 million children were orphans.

In addition to this humanitarian disaster, coercive power was completely fragmented in the DRC during the war. The state monopoly of violence and other means of coercion weakened, as warlords and even state representatives maintained private armies and militias. There was a shift from conventional state control to private domination at the local level, particularly in the war-ridden zones of the country that were fragmented by rival strongmen. More than 9 national armies got involved in what Madeleine Albright, former US Secretary of State, called the first African World War⁷. From 1998 the country’s territory was controlled by three main rebel groups, a dozen Congolese militias, rebel groups from Uganda, Burundi and Sudan, the Rwandan *Interhamwe* militia responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)⁸.

However, despite the overall high level of violence, there were stark differences between various local communities in the DRC. Some groups continued to suffer, but others, especially the Nande in north-eastern Congo, managed not only to insulate themselves from the violence, but also to thrive in their transnational economic enterprises. The Catholic University of Butembo, with its three schools – Law, Civil Engineering and Medicine, has continued to function since its establishment ten years ago by the Roman Catholic bishop of Butembo, Monsignor Kataliko. In spite of the civil war, people in Butembo built a new airport ten miles south of Beni, as well as a hydroelectric dam to power the region. Perhaps, this development was possible because the Nande traders participated extensively in the illegal gold trade in South East Asia and the Persian Gulf, in addition to trading coffee, beans and potatoes throughout the region. They made use of ethnic ties, investing their wealth in productive enterprises and commerce. Nande traders furnish a particularly striking instance, therefore, of a successful social organisation outside the state, and of the role of transnational networks in the process.

There is no central point of command in the DRC, but multiple, fragile, interconnected and contested centres of military might, welfare provision, ethno-religious and local loyalties claim sovereignty over people. These are set against a particular faction of the state, which claims effective legal sovereignty, and reacts in the name of national and popular will. Indeed, as Hansen and Stepputat (2006) put it, a key feature of the colonial world was that different, often conflicting registers of sovereignty coexisted and overlapped. In many post-colonial societies, sovereign power has remained historically fragmented and distributed among informal, but effective networks of local authority.

To sum up, in the past ten years endemic conflict has given rise to the collapse of public authority and the brutal disintegration of the formal state in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The facts about this are well known – 4 million people dead, entire zones of the country controlled by foreign armies, the lack of effective state presence in many regions. In the midst of this chaos, however, certain ethnic groups have been able to take advantage of the absence of state to institute new forms of order and development.

Drawing on the case of the Nande transnational trading networks in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, this book explores the following questions: in a situation where state support has largely vanished, and there is great destruction in the nation at large, why did the Nande economy thrive so much while other regions in the nation suffered? What does this suggest to us about the role of the state in Africa, as well as the nature of new informal economies, new transnational trading networks and their role in contemporary Africa?

The intent is to understand the continued importance of more “informal” ways of creating political order and economic management in sub-Saharan Africa. This is not so much a reaffirmation or a rejection of the African state as such, but a detailed analysis of societal responses to processes of state implosion, elementary insights into the workings of sovereignty, and the actors engaged in its formulation.

Theoretical framework and working hypotheses

This book works towards a detailed analysis of localised responses to the processes of state implosion and the fragmentation of coercion. In addition, It also examines the strategies employed by local actors to deal with the violent transformation of the state. How did particular social forces adapt to successive changes in the state framework? And when did these changes culminate in the emergence of something qualitatively new, such that a national territory continues to exist without a state? What strategies have been developed at a grassroots level to confront physical and economic insecurity in the wake of “state collapse”?

The book considers the forms of life that emerge from the debris of state disintegration -trading networks, new elites, new forms of ethnicity, new local-global connections. As the twentieth century came to a close with globalisation reaching new heights, and as state decrepitude reinforced communal boundaries to the advantage of more ethnic based sub-national polities, particularly brutal contradictions were generated in Africa’s heart, once again. This thesis concentrates on the contemporary production of such new socialities, specifically as exemplified by Nande transnational traders in the wake of the civil war.

In the gap left by the state’s retreat, a form of new governance has emerged among the Nande in eastern DRC in which non-state actors or sub-state actors adopt the art of governing. From the brutal reconfiguration of the DRC state, new forms of domination have emerged around new loyalties – non-national ones. The dynamics of global capital accumulation and Nande transnationality combine to produce a new and reinvigorated sense of ethnic identity and sub-national autonomy within the borders but largely beyond the reach of the authority of the DRC nation-state.

However, the absence of national laws or interests does not mean that there are no rules governing society. It is a pervasive mistake of Hobbesian thinking to conceive of the pre-state situation as an anarchical and disorganised powerless vacuum. According to Thomas Hobbes, although men differ in the relative strength of their natural powers, they are all fundamentally equal in their ability to physically harm or kill one another by various means. Fear may intervene, but if two people ever desire the same thing, the natural consequence of their mutual desire is war. For Hobbes, human nature is a purely mechanistic construct based

on appetites, desires and aversions expressed in power struggles between men. Thus, life before civil society and law was characterised by continuous and total war: “every man against every man”. This chaos is the state of nature, wholly lacking in culture and knowledge; a state in which human affairs are dominated by the continual fear and danger of violent death. “The life of man” in the state of nature, Hobbes famously wrote, is “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” In the state of nature, security is impossible for anyone, and the fear of death dominates every aspect of life (See *Leviathan* 1651).

Hobbes’s first premise of realism is the existence of a war of all against all – the perennial penury of the human condition. But this premise is conditioned on a fixed, static expression of power (Foucault 1980)⁹. The logical leap is that the absence of a sovereign equals the lack of rule and thus a constant state of disorder. Without the state – defined in the Weberian tradition as the legitimate monopoliser of violence – no order is possible. This is a construct that deserves incisive criticism. Is there an empirically verifiable state of war when and where no state exists? On the contrary, what emerged in a place like Butembo could be described as a continuation of neo-paternalism without the central state (Raeymaekers 2006).

The ideal of the Weberian project was never achieved in Africa in the first place. Even the idea of “state failure” is itself misleading because it gives the impression that the state was once integrated. Nowhere in Africa has the state ever reached the Weberian ideal because that concept was the product of a local and context-specific construction from the West. Statehood ought to be regarded, instead, as a relative concept. Particular states succeed, to varying degrees, in securing order, welfare and representation for their citizens (Tull 2003: 430).

The historical specificities of the North Kivu region and the sociopolitical particularities of the Nande transnational formation illuminate something crucial and potentially decisive for the DRC as a whole, and perhaps also for the relation of sub-Saharan Africa to the global regime of capital accumulation. A purely economic view might consider the Congo and most of Africa as essentially rental or extractive states, in terms of an overall marginalisation of economies based on raw materials (timber, rubber, extracted minerals and metals, etc.) and consequent economic collapse. Indeed, the Congolese economy is no longer based primarily on raw materials, a sector that has regressed enormously in quantity and productivity. Surplus generated for profit and state revenue has been largely absorbed within an overwhelmingly informal economy. The economic standpoint only sees what is recordable and quantifiable, and it tends to overlook the “informal” or the relational. Considering contemporary transnational trade in Africa narrowly in terms of cultural legacies of long-distance trade, is as one-sided as the economic view because the trans-border trade is part of accumulative activities. A theory of the interdependence and mutual constitution of

contemporary local community formation in Africa and transnational networks is challenged to address and account for the historical specificity and the particularities of their social organisation and content, in the present socio-political and historical moment.

By exploring the historically specific, material and practical preconditions of an ethnicity-based framework such as the Nande traders deployed, this work refocuses discussions of future African state formation onto what may be appropriately characterized as the postcolonial ‘afterlife’ of ethnic differences.

In the midst of an abundant anti-ethnic literature in African studies, there may be a renewed usefulness and necessity in theorising the salience and continuing production of ethnic differences in a manner that challenges the notion that ethnicity was merely a devious and divisive invention of colonialism that must simply be overcome. Of course, as Mahmood Mamdani notes, ethnicity was re-invented under colonial regimes. Therefore, since capitalism has not transformed life as quickly or completely as modernisation advocates of all stripes thought it might – and as Mobutu’s long reign in the Congo twisted ethnicity to his own needs – it has stayed on with a long, long afterlife. It is important to comprehend and theorise how ethnicity is being re-invented, yet again.

Brief historical and geographical context

With 17 other African countries, the Congo gained its independence in the 1960s. Belgium, being a late starter in the colonial game (and a particularly brutal and hypocritical one [Hoschild 1998]), did not foresee the prospect of decolonisation in good time. It had trained fewer candidates to take over as administrative officers than the other colonial powers, resulting in only three Congolese with graduate degrees in the country at the time of independence. However, its pace of mineral extraction and agricultural commercialisation had rapidly created an urbanised and partially proletarianised population (Peemans 1974). When demonstrations and riots erupted in late 1959, Belgium decided to pull out as quickly as possible – hoping to retain economic and administrative control while pliant Congolese politicians enjoyed big cars and other perquisites of power (Moore 2006). This abrupt and poorly prepared departure was followed by the short-lived rise to prominence of amateurs and half-educated politicians like the ill-fated Patrice Lumumba among others.

In 1960, the very nature of the social structure and political process placed extraordinary power in the hands of individuals standing on fragile pinnacles. Simultaneously, however, the pressure pulling at this power and the social forces constraining individual actions were so strong that none of these individuals could go against the colonialists who wanted independence in name only. The neo-colonialist United States hoped to gain strategic minerals from countries like the

Congo and to keep those resources away from their Cold War enemy, the USSR. The US sought to promote their notion of democracy a little more enthusiastically than the jaded Europeans, but they were also perfectly willing to dispense with it for strategic calculations (Noyce 2001). Their imposed favourite candidate, Joseph Desire Mobutu, proved to be powerful enough to nearly destroy the whole country over the next thirty-five years. Mobutu's corruption lasted until he was ousted in 1997 by Laurent-Desire Kabila with the help of Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers (Wrong 2000:3). Kabila himself was later assassinated by one of his bodyguards in January 2001. His son Joseph rules in a manner perceived by outsiders as better suited to the dictums of good governance and responsible economic management, yet the country remains war-torn, and a premier example of a failed and collapsed state (Moore 2001, 2004; Clapham 2002; Duffied 2001; Ottaway 2002).

Thus, the combination of external factors such as US and West European (supposed) Cold War aid to the Mobutu regime to secure access to Congo's mineral resources, and internal dynamics such as the Mobutu regime's neo-patrimonial policies, followed by wars and successive rebellions, conspired to undermine the framework of the nation-state and led to a dramatic and complex fragmentation of coercive power.

Throughout this book, I deploy the phrase "state retreat" to express the view that the state has not withered away completely. In the DRC, the nation still seems to subsist. The people still define themselves as Congolese and vote without coercion, even though the United Nations has to pay an estimated US\$500 million to orchestrate the whole electoral process in addition to the US\$ 1 billion it pays each year to maintain its biggest peacekeeping mission in the world.

Interplay exists between forces that contribute to the disintegration of the state and other countervailing forces that seem to make its reconstruction possible. The latter generally includes global capital and its caretakers in the UN, as well as various powerful countries with prospective economic interests in the DRC (US, Belgium and the larger EU, etc.). Thus, there are compelling forces at work to keep the country in one piece despite its internal dynamics of meltdown and its reconstitution into several relatively viable but discrete pieces¹⁰. This is precisely a neo-neocolonial logic of state (re-)formation that would privilege a rather large single state despite the turmoil and conflict that might otherwise tend to break it apart. In this sense, the national state is increasingly de-nationalised by dynamics that are simultaneously operating from within and without (Sassen 2006).

The Nande commercial elite seems to defend an uncanny position regarding the DRC's power dynamic. They want the state, but they want it to be as weak as possible. On the highest hill of Kambali stands a newly built mayor's office. The largest in the country, the office, a three story rectangular building, is an imposing

Romanesque structure resting on a concrete platform. It is oriented lengthwise, from east to west, with two main entrances, one facing north, the other south. It took three years to build – three years during which the rest of the country was being devastated by the civil war. In 2006, its exterior was freshly painted brown and tall windows and doors lining on each floor were newly equipped with plate glass. Its roof is peaked and coloured in deep brick red. If one stands before the southern entrance, one may gaze upon what used to be the country's vegetable reserve – fertile lands around Mont Ruwenzori. These lands were the origin of Nande trading activities in the 1950s and 1960s. Beans, carrots, tomatoes, onions, and other vegetables were produced and shipped regularly to Kampala (in Uganda) when Kisangani was racked with the violence of the Mulele rebellion in 1964 and to Kisangani when Kampala was in the throes of Uganda's war of independence in the late 1960s. Through the northern doors one sees elegant villas owned by traders who are now the new occupants of the site of the former MGL (Minerais des Grands Lacs), the colonial company in charge of the exploitation of diamonds and gold in North Kivu.

This building is one of the most distinguished mayor's offices in the whole country. It was built by the association of Nande traders from Butembo. One would think that this governmental building symbolises the attachment of the Nande people to the large state structure. That would be a false impression. The Nande have never had good relations with the Congo's central government, and since Independence have constantly worked outside the state structure. MacGaffey (1987:146) explains:

The Nande found themselves underrepresented in the national political scene and unable to participate in national decision making (...) their region was neglected by the government in all development programmes and allocation of resources. After independence, when foreign exchange was allocated by quotas, the east was passed by. However, this distance from the central government also meant that Nande were to some extent beyond its control. It gave them a certain degree of autonomy, making it easier to organise their own affairs in response to government neglect.

Does the new mayor's office signify a "second coming" of the state or is it a way of fixing the state in a specific building and in a specific way, just as the gothic cathedrals of Europe have become monumental sites for tourism rather than functional spaces for the life of the church? Does the building mark the meeting point of the socio-economic and political forces conditioning the emergence of the Nande social arrangements? Why did they invest so much in this government building?

One reasonable hypothesis is that the Nande were pre-empting objections against the idea of moving the capital city of North Kivu province from Goma to Butembo. In 2004, a lobbying group of Nande traders wanted the capital city

of the province to move to Butembo, but the bid was rejected for lack of infrastructure in Butembo. With the capital city of the province relocated in Butembo, the Nande could achieve a complete autonomy of their region in terms of resource exploitation and cross-border trade. It would have also extended and officially recognised the social and political hegemony of the Nande “bourgeoisie,” already legitimated by the Catholic Church officialdom, the figurehead mayor, and other customary figures of Nande authority, and premised upon not one but several relatively mobile forms of violence that supply the ultimate resources of coercion and, thus, hierarchical social order. The physical infrastructure that was presumed inadequate in Butembo was then summarily supplied, even to excess. However, Butembo did not become the official capital, but it stands now as a kind of shadow capital where the real action takes place.

Methods and data presentation

The analysis developed in this book is based on 14 months of fieldwork in Butembo from August 2005 to August 2006, and from December 2006 to January 2007. Extended, open-ended interviews were conducted with 12 Nande traders, including the eight richest traders. Interviews were also carried out with 11 wives of traders, eight children of traders, 10 shopkeepers, and nine truck drivers. The bishop of Butembo, five Protestant pastors, three university professors, four medical doctors, as well as eight peasants and five gold diggers were also interviewed. Also, three customs agents at Kasindi were interviewed.

In addition to my work in Butembo, I spent a week in Maguera and Masereka, the towns 10 miles south of Butembo where the most important traders were born or trace their family origins. I also travelled north to the Ituri region and visited Mongwalu where most of the gold comes from. During this trip, I was particularly interested in the relationship between Nande and non-Nande. I gathered most of the ethnographic data from semi-structured open-ended questions and informal conversation over dinner or a glass of beer. My knowledge of Swahili made it easier for me to conduct this sort of participant observation in Butembo as well as in Ituri. However, despite the fact that I am from the DRC, it took me four months to conduct my first interview. The subject of research was very sensitive and no one was ready to discuss their business with a virtual stranger. I spent the first four months living as a guest in the priests’ house. It was when I changed my location and went to live with a family of four in a very popular area called Furu¹¹ that things changed dramatically in terms of access to the people.

The findings from this research are augmented with documents, published interviews, and Catholic and Protestant church archives. Outside of formal and informal interviews, I spent a considerable time in the market observing the

frenetic mass of people buying and selling things – a few potatoes, big bags of beans, bananas, onions, and a variety of cheap commodities from Dubai, Jakarta or China. Wednesdays and Saturdays are special market days. People come from surrounding villages with vegetables, beans, cassava, etc. They buy soap, salt, and other items not found in the villages where people keep their money in US dollars.

The most prominent traders have formed a new social class that is becoming more and more separate. Many marriages within this class are arranged. The circle of relationships is getting smaller and smaller. One trader joked during my interview: “We in Butembo [the ‘bourgeoisie’] will have problems of consanguinity because people will end up marrying their own cousins, as the circle of rich people is becoming smaller and smaller.” The wealthiest traders are aware of the growing gap between them and the rest of the population. They expressed this awareness by acknowledging that they needed to find ways to help the growing number of poor in the city. Nonetheless, I also witnessed a kind of mercantilisation of society. Non-instrumental relations, the so-called “African solidarity” long praised by poets, (Senghor, Césaire, etc.) are dying or disappearing in the face of a frenzied search for profit. Customary forms of African solidarity may indeed be operative, but now in strictly instrumental and even cynical ways. Indeed, the commodification of labour and ethnic relations, as well as the mobilisation of kinship relations for the sake of capital accumulation, relies upon the traditional understanding of mutual responsibility, even if everyone knows that it is only self-serving.

My decision to stay primarily in Butembo was dictated by its remarkable combination of dynamism and homogeneity; it is a centre for agricultural activities and trade. The 600,000 inhabitants of Butembo, are overwhelmingly Nande. In North Kivu¹² 60 per cent of traders and other socio-economic actors are Nande (Mirembe 2005), but in Butembo, 99.99 per cent of traders are Nande. The city of Butembo played the double role of warehouse and marketplace for merchandise imported from outside the country during the 1980s and 1990s. This extraordinary dynamism has attracted previous scholarly interest (MacGaffey 1987; MacGaffey et al. 1991; Vwakyankazi 1982; Ndaywell 1998; Leclercq 2001; Raeymaekers 2004; Mirembe 2005).¹³

When considering Butembo, however, we are confronted with a very complex phenomenon that goes beyond mere alignment on an ethnic base, one whose organisation revolves around the mobilisation of relational resources. Thus, the ethnic experience in Butembo, as well as adjacent areas influenced by the Nande, is probably not consistent with all other regions. There is, indeed, considerable diversity across various regions based on the historical particularities and relative capacities of one or another elite or prospective elite project. One must inquire

into why this was the most likely or most viable outcome. What were the conceivable preconditions of an “ethnicity”-based framework for the prior alignments of political power, capital accumulation, and social prestige that shaped the ensuing power struggles? Hence, my principal research question is: in the absence of an effective national government and in the presence of many armed contenders for power, how did the Nande traders mobilise their ethnicity to build and protect a self-sustaining, prosperous economic enterprise in eastern Congo?

To answer this question, the book has gathered empirical and ethnographic data to illuminate what is remarkable, innovative, resilient, and creative about Nande transnational networks and their transnational production of local community, without relinquishing its critical vantage. The book also exposes how this particular formulation of transnationalism and ethnic insularity colludes with an internecine (even genocidal) violence on the edges of a remote ethnic homeland on the borders of a collapsed state. The Nande capitalist class, or more precisely, the Nande capitalist elite – class consciousness is just being formed in recent years – have constituted their power with the recourse of the militias, which they finance. Most of the militia groups which were involved in the civil war and the enduring reign of terror in North Kivu (including the ADLR, *Mayi Mayi*, and even the DRC government soldiers) sell their minerals to Nande traders who plainly participate in the war as its principal financiers. The Nande have so far been insulated from the worst of the war, but they have also benefited from it, and to some extent, have even been responsible for it.

The conclusion is that the Nande’s newly found desire for government at a distance and governance through local communitarian mechanisms illustrates a kind of neo-liberalism. One in which a weak national state serves as a hollow shell, providing minimum security and stability for otherwise unhindered capital accumulation, while the so-called free market is entirely unencumbered. Therein, the local communities and networks are free from any onerous regulation, interference, and impositions by the state that might otherwise, if only occasionally, be an impediment to plunder. In other words, the Nande people do not desire full autonomy or complete separation from the DRC state, and they do not seek anything resembling a Nande national self-determination. Rather, they welcome the stabilisation of the nation-state, but only insofar as it would be a relatively “weak” and unobtrusive one because it leaves them free from state surveillance and the unwelcome taxation of their transnational and cross-border trade. So, they prefer an arrangement similar to what has persisted in various forms throughout the recent decades (even back into the Mobutu era). That is the same sort of frail neoliberal nation-state on the agenda of the global corporations interested in the DRC’s resources.

Organisation of the book

Chapter Two argues that the discourse of state failure on Africa is hegemonic in the sense that it reveals more than anything the way Africa is being constructed as the object of someone else's power.

Chapter Three situates Nande trading activities within the history of the political economy of the DRC. In order to understand why the Nande have been so successful throughout the economic history of the Congo, one has to consider the cultural and endogenous elements of the Nande entrepreneurial traditions. Indeed, to make sense of the contemporary situation in Butembo, one has to integrate that ethnographic snapshot into a longer historical perspective, by deciphering the continuities and discontinuities of political economic order in the region. To set the stage for the discussion, this chapter establishes the historical groundwork for understanding why the Congo is in the shape it is now and why the Nande have been exceptionally successful at insulating themselves from the surrounding violence, building and protecting a self-sustaining, prosperous transnational economic enterprise in the midst of the bloodiest civil war on record.

Chapters Four and Five sketch the contemporary structure of Nande transnational networks, and the strategies used to facilitate economic growth. The dynamism witnessed in Butembo is the result of trading network activities which extend from the local to the global. Chapter four demonstrates how these networks work and how their dynamism is sustained over time. By developing quasi-kin relationships with Arab counterparts in Dubai and Chinese merchants in Hong Kong and mainland China, Nande traders have modified the sense of "family" within their own ethnic society. Family has become not merely blood-related or even narrowly ethnic, but also a business-related concept. There is, notably, a distinct resonance with the model of Mafia crime families which, of course, are always business families. There is also a resemblance to the tradition of royal dynastic reproduction. In contrast to the West, Nande capitalism does not reduce and privatise the family into a nuclear one, but extends it to embrace other people. However, such strategies also endanger social reproduction. Traders inter-marry and form a separate social class, distancing themselves more and more from others classes within the local Nande co-ethnic community, while reinvigorating and expanding the salience of Nande ethnicity transnationally. Indeed, this reconceptualisation and reconfiguration of kinship is the key to understanding ethnicity as precisely not essential or trans-historical, but as the ever-contradictory historically specific production of social relations.

Chapter Six explores the Nande case in order to consider the current recourse to ethnicity in Africa, not as a result of involution or frustration (Chretien 1991, Mbembe 1987), but if dictated, in part, by endogenous rationality, also the dynamic

expression of distinct historicities. Thus, this chapter considers the capacity of ethnicity to offer a political and economic alternative to the breakdown of the state. Indeed, rather than continuing to view ethnicity merely as a regrettable if not detrimental residue of the past, this chapter inquires into the relation between contemporary (and transnational) productions of ethnicity and new forms of life.

Chapter Seven investigates the interactions between the new entrepreneurial elite and the traditional (customary) elite on the one hand, and the old postcolonial professional and intellectual elite on the other. In the hierarchical social order the Nande elders played the role of elites guiding the ethnic community. Elders of the family, traditional chiefs or ritual notables are the traditional elite. Elite conflict resulted in the complete dominance of the traders, who now construct a social environment in their own image. The traditional elite have given up the struggle, while the intellectual and professional elite are silenced by the fortunes of the traders. The Catholic Church plays a very important role in mediating the struggles between the intellectual and commercial elite. Through their position of moral authority, the religious elite continue to enjoy some consideration and deference from all sides, while also being called upon to legitimise the new commercial elite's social dominance.

Chapter Eight studies how Nande traders protect their capitalist investments in a stateless situation. According to Charles Tilly's account of the origins of the European system of state, coercion and capital go hand in hand. Tilly maintains that, historically, a "capitalised coercion mode of accumulation," which involved elements of both "coercion-intensive" and "capital-intensive" modes, proved more effective in war and therefore provided a compelling model which other European states soon followed (Tilly 1992:30). Tilly's discussion of European history helps us to understand the Nande's position in the civil war. In the absence of a powerful DRC state, the Nande merchants draw protection for their products and trade from militias, while militias gain access to military means from traders' support. This is possible because the existence of a state implies a constant process of separating certain aspects of social relations and defining them as political – in contradiction with the economic (Holloway 1994). Civil wars involve the development of a kind of anti-state organisation of social relations.

In this book, there is a very clear social and political hegemony of the Nande economic elite, or commercial "bourgeoisie," legitimised through the Church officialdom, the figurehead mayor, and other customary figures of Nande authority; it is premised upon not one but several relatively mobile formations of violence that supply the ultimate resources of coercion and thus social order. Outside of its central sphere of control, there have been varying degrees of a chaotic reign of terror by the respective militias. In their own spheres of control,

the militias even act as *de facto* territorial states through their imposition of taxes and the collection of tariffs and customs duties as their reward for their more or less formalised makeshift border policing practices. However, the Nande capitalists based in Butembo clearly seem to rely upon the ultimate availability of the militias' violence to secure their own ends as needed, while sustaining an uneasy kind of mutual dependency. As long as the traders do not try to impose themselves (their rule or "law") too much on the militias' brutal extraction in the peripheries of the Nande centre, and as long as the militias steer clear and do not disrupt the Nande capitalists' prosperous sphere of control and stability, then there is a definite, if somewhat elusive, correspondence between the traders' social and economic power, on the one hand, and their effective political power and frequent potential access to military/coercive violence, on the other.

Chapter Nine shows that Nande traders who engage in the global economy as intermediaries between subnational and transnational economic arenas, welcome the sort of neoliberal nation-state that is on the agenda of the global corporations interested in the Congo's resources (and also those of the US, European, and Chinese governments, as well as the UN). This chapter analyses the connection between the local and the global in the context of a fragmented state. Nande traders operate in the absence of a central state. They have, however, created their own version of a functional regional state. Like Italian and Dutch merchants in the 17th century, Nande traders have created their own access to defensive means in the presence of marauders, state predators and rebels. Nande traders are reconstituting local institutions by establishing and localising their social dominance. This chapter shows that the Nande had taken advantage of the absence of the government to organise and protect a self-sustaining and prosperous transnational enterprise. This chapter examines the prospects for a restoration of the DRC nation-state following the October 2006 elections, which were the first democratic elections since 1960. What forms of national government would make the survival of the Nande form of self-sufficiency possible, difficult, and impossible?

Chapter Ten concludes the work. The ethnographic research in the present book shows how innovative, resilient and creative Nande trust networks have been. Even though the research focuses on Nande transnational production of local community in eastern DRC, it also exposes Nande's collusion with the agents of chaos in North Kivu. This complexity of the Nande situation contrasts with the caricature of the heart of darkness perpetuated in the western media and literature analysing the situation in the heart of Africa.

Notes

1. *Griot* is a French word to designate the person who announced the King's message to the subjects in African traditional Kingdoms.
2. The Nande are mainly agriculturalists and pastoralists, but since the 1980s and 1990s, they have been extremely dynamic in transnational trade. In 2005, more than 80 per cent of the active population in Butembo was self-employed. The majority are agriculturalists and traders. The latter could be small scale traders or transnational businessmen. Transborder trading became very important in the 1990s (Macgaffey, 1996; Mirembe 2004) and was most often family enterprises based on networks of social relations that channel local and long distance flows of information. According to field observation, when one assimilates friendship to familial relations, one observes that 80 per cent of employees belong to the same extended family as their employer; 70 per cent of employees are hired on an oral contract while 30 per cent have a written agreement, 60 per cent of employees are male and 40 per cent female, 52 per cent are single. The average wage is US\$20 per month while an average family of three spends US\$50 a month. The hours of work are not fixed. There is lots of overtime due to the ambulatory character trade activities have taken due to insecurity in the surrounding areas.
3. Human Rights Watch report 2005, and MONUC report on human rights abuse in Ituri, 2005.
4. FDLR is a political organisation representing Rwandan Hutu refugees in eastern Congo. It was created in 2000 in opposition to the Kagame regime and included many Rwandan refugees who had been present on Congolese territory since 1994. Propaganda of the current Rwandan government wants people to believe that FDLR is formed by "ex-FAR/Interahamwes" suggesting that it is a criminal group of "genocidaires" (Auteserre 2006). Actually, FDLR is an inclusive term regardless of affiliation to any armed groups, innocent as well as guilty of the 1994 genocide.
5. Interview with Ndivito, the president of FEC/Butembo (Federation des Entrepreneurs du Congo).
6. In "Congo's conflict: Heart of Darkness", in *Beliefnet*, June 2, 2005, Sarah Coleman notes that the number of deaths in the Congo conflict amounts to a death toll higher than the combination of the estimated deaths of the conflict in Darfur as June 2005 (400,000), the 2004 tsunami (169,752), the Rwandan genocide (937,000), added to all American deaths in every war fought since 1776 (1,540,665). The figure of 4 million is provided by International Rescue Committee (IRC) in its annual report 2006. See www.theIRC.org For IRC, only ten per cent of the deaths were directly caused by bullets. The remaining death were indirectly related to war and were the effects of infectious disease and malnutrition. Many NGOs contested IRC figures as exaggerated and point to important methodological problems in the IRC study. Doctors Without Borders, for example, put the death toll of the Congolese conflict between one and two million (Auteserre, S. unpublished doctoral thesis, on "Local Violence, International Indifference, 2006). On the uncertainty surrounding the IRC's statistics, see "The True Cause of Death in the Congo", Strategy Page, January 12, 2006 (<http://www.strategypage.com>).
7. Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi were backing the rebels and Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Eritrea, Chad and Sudan assisted the DRC government. See Michael Nest, 2006; Thomas

Callaghy, 1998; David Shearer, 1999, Economist Intelligence Unit, DRC country Report, November 1998.

8. The main rebel groups are: Congolese Rally for Democracy (Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie, RCD-Goma), Congolese Movement of Liberation (Mouvement Congolais de Liberation, MLC), Congolese Rally for Democracy–Kisangani/Movement of Liberation (Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie–Kisangani/Movement de Liberation, RCD-K/ML). The relations within rebel groups, and between them and their foreign backers, were fractious. In 1999, disagreement between the Ugandan People Defence Force (UPDF) and Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) over who should lead the RCD resulted in the group splitting into two factions: RCD-Goma and RCD-K/ML. The three broad zones of military influence in territory occupied by antigovernment forces are: MLC/Uganda zone in north and northeast DRC, an RCD-K/ML/Uganda zone in northeast and RCD-Goma/Rwanda zone in central-eastern DRC. From 1998, the eastern provinces swarmed with countless local militias operating on an ethnic basis: the Mai Mai, the Ngilima (Nande), the Kasingien (Kasinga), and the Katuko (Tembo). The term Mai Mai became a generic term to refer to militias linked to Native Authority. Other Congolese militias involved in the exercise of coercion in their areas of control, especially in the Ituri province, are: l'Armee de liberation du Congo (ALC), L'Armee du peuple congolais (APC), les Forces armees du peuple congolais (FAPC), le Front pour la liberation du Congo (FLC), le Front pour l'integration et la paix en Ituri (FIPI) le Front populaire pour la democratie au Congo (FPDC), le Front des Nationalistes Integriationnistes (FNI), le Partie de l'Unite pour la Sauvegarde de l'Integrite du Congo (PUSIC), l'Union des patriotes congolais (UPC), Tout pour la paix et le developement (TPD), a militia group turned into an NGO and controlled by Serufuli, the governor of North Kivu, Militia of dissident general Nkundabatware, Militia of commandant Gedeon, le Mouvement de resistance congolaise (MRC) of Peter Karim. Rebels from other countries had their bases in the DRC: the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the Allied Democratic Forces national Army for the liberation of Uganda (ADF/NALU), les Forces pour la Defense de la Democratie-Coalition nationale pour la defense de la Democratie (FDD-CNDD) an Burundian rebel coalition, the Force nationale pour la liberation du Burundi (FNL), the Interhamwe militias accused by the Rwandan government of perpetrating the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and finally, the Forces democratiques pour la liberation du Rwanda (FDLR). This movement is illusive and disavows affiliation to any of the armed groups, as well as innocence or guilt in the 1994 genocide. See Michael Nest, *The Democratic Republic of Congo, : economic dimensions of war and peace*, International Peace academy occasional paper series, 2006; David Shearer, *Africa's Great war*, 1999, Clark, *Expending Ugandan intervention in Congo*, 2001; International Crisis Groups reports on the DRC from 1998 onward.
9. Foucault's work has enabled us to view a more fluid conception of power, allowing us to see that in each relation power ebbs and flows, power and resistance define one another. The conditions of possibility of the state should be wrenched away from overworn images of power-craving Hobbesian human nature. The treachery of a fixed notion of power predicates the system of domination inherent to the state structure: the state monopolises power-violence and thus legitimacy of governance, and others do not. See Paul Rabinow's introductory remarks in the *Foucault Reader* (1984)

10. It seems not very different from the situation in today's Iraq. See also Reno (2003) who suggests a comparison of the international anarchical society in which the unifying idea of an international society (this is the United Nations) is constantly being confronted with the fractioning of it constituent parts.
11. This area is named *Furu*, meaning garbage dump, because it is literally located where people living in the residential area dumped their garbage.
12. North Kivu province has 4 territories, including Lubero and Beni populated by the Nande, Masisi and Rutshuru populated by Congolese Hutu and Tutsi, and Walikale, mostly populated by the Hunde.
13. Ndaywell focuses on the way the Nande monopolise the coffee and gold trade (1998: 751). Hugues Leclercq also talks about the Nande network smuggling gold from northeast Congo to Uganda (2001:69). Olivier Ferrier considers how the Nande have constructed a local capitalism despite their participation in long distance trade (2002: 192). MacGaffey emphasises that Nande traders' accumulation activities in the northeast of the country are particularly linked to what she refers to as second economy, meaning informal economy with regard to the law. A recent observer, Timothy Raeymaekers, evokes diverse signs of the dynamism of Butembo "Butembo the capital city of Nande, is a city of shops full of local and imported merchandise [...] buildings are rising everywhere... Between Beni and Butembo workers are mending the road. Despite a high rate of poverty, cars and other luxury items are delivered on weekly basis from Dubai (United Emirates Arabs) and Southeast Asia where the Nande have developed lucrative affairs these past years" (2004:60).

2

“The Failed State”: A Hegemonic Discourse?

Throughout the post-colonial period, the study of the African states has resulted in claims of a failed or collapsed state, where the central government of a country is no longer able to provide the leadership and protection necessary for the people. These analyses qualify post-colonial African states as failed states. This notion has been applied to many African countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Indeed, if one speaks of the Congo, one inevitably conjures up a spectre of strife, dissolution, corruption, horrendous forms of ethnic factionalism and hatred, and overall horror. Joseph Conrad's well-known characterisation of it as the “heart of darkness” is certainly apt here. These images of the Congo dominate the media as well as writings by social scientists who specialise in the DRC (see Young 1984; Reno 1990; Evans 2000). The assumption by these authors is that the DRC is a failed state¹ – a term which implies a failed society. Within the context of an absent or failed state, the assumption is that selfishness will reign (Locke, Hobbes). Thus, a failed state adversely affects all who live under its crippled aegis and its weakness ensures the suffering of all except those who manage to circumvent the system. However, these circumventions are understood not only as forms of corruption, but as criminal acts from which only a few will benefit (Bayart, Ellis and Hibou 1999; Zartman 2004).

The economy cannot be separated from this socio-political model of the state. A strong state survives because it can regulate production and trade, profit (through taxation, etc.), and thus sustain itself. An informal economy, one that works outside state and taxation structures, is particularly irritating to the state. The overall assumption is that when a state is politically and economically unstable, weak or absent, all will suffer. As the argument goes, the DRC is not only a weak and unstable state, but also one that is inherently violent. The implication is that all its population must be suffering terribly.

African economies have been interpreted as being increasingly marginalised by the Western economies (Callaghy and Ravenhill 1993; Bach 1998; Castells 1998). Studies of globalisation often ignore or merely pass over Africa.² Extant literature on globalisation is devoted largely to advanced capitalist countries. Any attention to the developing world usually concentrates on the rise and fall – and rise again – of the newly industrialised countries of Asia. Africa is “off the map,” (Ferguson 2006), rarely noticed, aside from the fact that less capital is invested there now than in the 1960s, poverty is increasing, debts continue to grow, and the wars never end. Liberal and progressive intellectuals and journalists may portray the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund’s activities in Africa as the recolonisation of the Dark Continent, but these conceptions are not nearly as deterministic and Eurocentric as the less sympathetic works which often fail to advance beyond a recapitulation of the dependency theory (Bayart 1989). Bayart provides a view of African inequality in which the African ruling class has full agency. Globalisation seems to be the same old story for Africa.

The post-Cold War predicament, structured by the ideology and practice of global neo-liberalism and the attendant lack of alternatives, affects Africa profoundly. In the advanced capitalist world, what some call the First World, globalisation is about the deepening of commodity relations, the privatisation of public services, the search for cheaper and more productive labour, coping with crises of over-accumulation and under-consumption, and contraction of space and time – all of which stem from an ideology seemingly devoid of other options (Moore 2001; Harvey 2000). Globalisation is different in Africa. There, even after over a century of colonial and postcolonial entanglement with the world economy, the consolidation and expansion of capitalism is still in process (Ley 1994). And according to Berger (2001), there remains little of the ‘national’ shell for development in Africa. Deliberately confusing past and present tense, Hardt and Negri (2000) state that “the productive relationship with the “dark continent” serves as the economic foundation of the European nation-state” and the central motor for the creation of capitalism came from outside England, from global commerce, and more accurately, from conquest (Hardt and Negri 2000: 115, 257). In Africa, the era of state consolidation was over before it even started to get off the ground. It is being replaced by warlordism in places like Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, connected tightly to the global circuits of coltan³ and debt-collection (Reno 2003; Duffield 2001).

International actors, according to Auteserre (2005), picture the DRC as an inherently violent country where violence is always expected.

Violence was the usual mode of relations between the Congolese state and its population... The Congo was a country with a history of abuses and a constant pattern of violence against the population by people in power... therefore, the violence, and the ‘armed men’ ... preying on the population as we can observe it

now were present ‘in the same way’ as they had ‘always’ been before... a high level of rape has always existed in the Congo (a Belgian diplomat in DRC quoted by Auteserre, 2005).

The Congo is perceived as a country in a state of quasi-anarchy and chaos, and a theatre of senseless and horrific violence. And as we have seen, contemporary scholars tend to replicate tired stereotypes of Africa by emphatically coupling state dysfunction and societal savagery. While these scholars point to the powerful tendencies towards violence and conditions of suffering that exist in many African states, they fail to see that this condition does not preclude any governance, whatsoever.

This view often interprets African states in terms of their failure to adhere to a Weberian model of the rational-legal state, and their limited capacity with respect to resource extraction, social control or policy implementation. Marx Weber (1978:54) defined the state as a: Ruling organisation [which] will be called ‘political’ insofar as its existence and order is continuously safeguarded within a given territorial area by the threat and application of physical force on the part of the administrative staff.

Weber’s conception of the rationalisation of the state identifies legibility as the process par excellence for making everything knowable by requiring consistent and regular formalities, (such as a census for quantifying and qualifying the population) and mandatory individualised identities and names, combining abstraction (everything is part of an abstracted mass) with singularisation (each individual has his or her fixed location in time and space) (Scott 1998). Thus, European political theology has bestowed the state with both a quality of transcendence and a related monopoly over violence (Abrams 1988). African states are thought to have failed to adhere to this Weberian conception of the state as a rationalised administrative form of political organisation.

In this rationalised vision of political life, the state is imagined as an always incomplete project that must constantly be spoken of – and visualised – through an invocation of wildness, lawlessness, and savagery that not only lies outside its jurisdiction but also threatens it from within (Das and Poole 2004). European colonialism sought to impose and institutionalise this model of statehood. The perception of the Congo as an inherently violent country, and the assumption that when a state is politically and economically unstable, weak and absent, all will suffer, stem from a misleading Eurocentric conception of statehood and are empirically contradicted by the facts on ground. In the following pages, I will show that these perceptions are based upon two fallacies.

First, simply to treat African states as incomplete or failed obscures the production of political order outside the framework of the postcolonial state (it is a view of the state as seen from above, indeed from the standpoint of the

state itself). The lack of government does not necessarily mean the lack of governance. The latter may be provided by non-state agents and involves other types of loyalties than the national ones. The demise of state power has allowed for the emergence of governance through new ethnic trading networks, giving ethnicity a revitalised power in Congolese society. However, this rise has not been because of an utter absence of the state, but in key aspects, comes through an alliance with state forces. Contrary to the viewpoint that only warlords can emerge in the event of a state collapse, these new groups represent a complex re-definition of the relations between a state and its citizenry in which the state has had to reorient where it asserts its limited power, but is nonetheless still present. The Nande, an example of a group that has emerged partly “because” of state absence, are better understood as intricately intertwined with the state.

Secondly, it would also be a fallacy to suggest that the Nande ‘model’ is an alternative to the incapacities of the post-colonial state to secure peace and to deliver on the promises of liberalism. Rather, by creating a historical reconstruction of how this picture has come about, and most importantly, by drawing inspiration from McGaffey’s earlier work in the same region, this research defies these presumptions, but not in ways which might be expected. Contrary to presumptions that people do get along, and that small isolated societies manage to function day-to-day outside of the state apparatus, this study has critically suggested that the supposedly self-governing and market-driven Nande network – engaged in their own egoistic pursuits and enacting their own forms of governance without the presence of an arbiter state – presents itself falsely as a panacea (the solution to the state disintegration).

Statehood and the Nande Example

Just as Christ is the intermediary to whom man attributes all his own divinity and all his religious bonds, so the state is the intermediary to which man confides all his non-divinity and all his human freedom. The political state, in relation to civil society, is just as spiritual as is heaven in relation to earth. It stands in the same opposition to civil society, and overcomes it in the same manner as religion overcomes the narrowness of the profane world; i.e., it has to acknowledge it again, re-establish it, and allow itself to be dominated by it (Marx, “On the Jewish Question”, [1843] 1978:32-34)

At the heart of the current picture of the DRC stands a flawed understanding of the state itself, its functions and its performance. Marx, in language which recalls another German philosopher, Ludwig Feuerbach, shows us that the state is nothing other than “an imaginary sovereign infused with an unreal universality”, and this is indeed what Marx called “The sophistry of the political state itself” (*idem*, p. 34). But, which state (or what aspects of the state) is Marx critiquing?

Which of these virtually theological aspects of statehood have led, on the occasion of their poor performance, to the qualification of African countries as weak, fragile, criminalised, failed and collapsed?

In his “Seeing like a State”, James Scott (1998) gives an interesting commentary on the modern state by which African states, in general and the DRC, in particular, are judged. For Scott, the state seeks to make everything legible for administrative and economic purposes. By legible, Scott refers to the desire to make everything knowable through codifying procedures such as population registries, and mandatory last names. Drawing on Foucault, Scott writes, “Legibility implies a viewer whose place is central and whose vision is synoptic” (Scott 1998:79). The inverse of legibility is resistance: what is not known, or illegible, and not predictable. As Scott writes, “Illegibility has been and remains a reliable resource for political autonomy” (*idem*, p.54). According to him, bureaucratic logic and commercial logic are the same for the modern state.

For Scott, the best analogy of the state and its performances is the management of forestry. Scientific forestry management techniques in the late eighteenth century rested on principles of uniformity (mono-crop culture), simplification (weeding out unnecessary growth), and aesthetic regimentation. These regulations led to forests with better legibility: “the forest itself need not be seen; it could be ‘read’ accurately from the tables and maps of the forester’s office” (Scott 1998:15). Similarly, communal landholdings were changed in favour of more grid-like land tenure structures that facilitated taxation. Cities were planned to be more legible from the outside (to the state) but with “no necessary relationship to the order of life as it is experienced by its residents” (*idem*, p. 58). Simplification, abstraction, and homogenisation are three particular categories of logic which defined modernity from the 18th century onwards. The modern state is political in so far as it is oriented towards securing its order over peoples and spaces. Modern states view the past as an impediment to be transformed for a better future, and it is this new knowledge that will prevail over local and practical knowledge.

While for Scott there is only the divide between the legible and the illegible, the present study takes place in the space between the two domains. The Nande practices and politics of social as well as economic life compel a rethink of the state from the margins. In keeping with this re-conception, the boundaries between legal and illegal, centre and periphery, are pushed by redefining the so-called failed state. The evidence provided in this study shows that states in Africa are built, in many instances, on practices that are “illegible”. In fact, it is on the border between norm and exception, legality and illegality that the business of sovereignty is conducted (Ferre 2004:87). As the Nande case shows, the DRC state is failed only for those who see from the centre and those who follow without further ethnographic analysis, the statist narrative from the centre. To paraphrase Das

and Poole (2004), it is from the margins – both territorial (border with Uganda) and legal (bypassing custom services) – that the Nande are overwriting the DRC's legibility while re-emerging from its disintegration.

However, it would be a fallacy to define the Nande society as small and isolated communities that could get along and function day-to-day, if left alone - they do not need a state apparatus. The real picture is much more complicated than that. In the Nande region, the state is most certainly weak or even absent. They have, however, thrived within this context. Many Nande have grown rich from their lucrative international trade in and outside the region. To call their actions 'corrupt', however, offers only a one-dimensional view of what is in fact a paradoxical situation with a complicated history. In fact, Nande traders do "give back" economically for the benefit of the region as a whole. Some Nande invest considerable portions of their profits back into the community (MacGaffey 2000), such that the region has a thriving economy, decent schools, and health care. Rather than orienting their economy westward toward the Congo River and the Congolese capital, Kinshasa, they orient their activities instead to the east along much older trade routes; and they are hardly confined to East Africa, but rather travel regularly to the Middle East and East Asia.

This was the conclusion MacGaffey reached in his research of the mismanagement of the economy during the Mobutu regime. The present study extends the previous research into a new era of both catastrophic suffering and remarkable global connections.

The Nande's commercial dynamism in the hostile political and economic environment of the DRC forces a re-definition of state power and the notion of "survival". The Nande anthropological site is one where law, economy, politics and other state practices are guided by additional forms of regulations and loyalties. This study responds to the anthropological invitation (Das and Poole 2004) to rethink the boundaries between centre and periphery, public and private, legal and illegal that run through the heart of even the most successful European liberal state.

The present research is located on the margins of what is accepted as the territory of unquestioned state control and legitimacy. Places like Butembo, the Nande capital city, are simultaneously sites where nature can be imagined as wild and uncontrolled and where the state is constantly trying to re-establish modes of order and lawmaking. There, laws and other forms of regulation and governance emanate from the pressing needs of Nande people to secure economic survival, and of the Nande commercial elite to secure their own political control and social order. This study departs from the ubiquitously expanded notion of the state as a greater or lesser monopoly of legitimate coercive violence, exercised spatially over a limited territory. The research site shows that the state is never the unique and exclusive form of social relations, which are always un-predetermined, agonistic, and unresolved. These relations of struggle entail a full panoply of

contests over objectification and fetishisation of human productive powers as alien forces of domination for which the state tends... to be the hegemonic manifestation (De Genova 2007:442; Holloway 1994). The Nande region is one of the many places where the state is continually both experienced and undone through the illegibility of its own practices, documents and words. Unlike in the rationalised world of Weberian abstractions, the DRC state, as seen from its margins, is inscrutable, incoherent, unpredictable, and unreliable. But to characterise these features as failure is merely to retain and recapitulate a great many statist fantasies.

In the tradition of political science, the state is taken as a basic, and largely unquestioned, category. Categories such as authority, rights or sovereignty are generally discussed in the tradition of political theory, but the state, as a category, is simply assumed. The theoretical challenges defined in this study are precisely to dissolve the state as a category in the Kantian sense⁴; it entails understanding the state not as a thing in itself, but as a social form, a form of social relations (Holloway 1994). By defining the state as a social phenomenon and a form of social relations - i.e., relations between people - the study recognises the fluidity, unpredictability and instability of this category. Indeed, these relations have solidified certain forms that appear to have acquired their own autonomy, their own dynamic. By taking these forms (state, money, kinship or ethnicity) as given, some academic disciplines have indeed contributed to their apparent rigidity. The state, then, appears rigid, and the classic Weberian conception of the state treats that semblance of rigidity as a given and positive fact⁵. As the present study will show, after first displaying how the debate on the state has evolved within African scholarship, the notion that African states have failed or collapsed is part of the same movement to reify and fetishise the colonially imposed Weberian model of statehood.

State Failure and State Collapse

In the dominant political science literature, state “collapse” refers to the crumbling of institutions while state “failure” is defined as the non-performance of key state functions (Zartman 1995). State collapse is a situation where the structure, authority, law and political order have fallen apart. State failure, on the other hand, begs the question of what the core functions of the state actually are, and these may vary from minimal concern with basic security to respect for the rights of citizens, and even the provision of welfare (Clapham 2002). In 1994, Rwanda qualified as a failed state because it failed to assure protection to much of its population, but it had not collapsed. On the contrary, highly disciplined agents of the state pursued the task of murdering many of its citizens with incredible efficiency.

According to Neil Cooper (2002), two main factors explain contemporary incidents of state collapse. It can be understood as a post-Cold War re-ordering of the political map consequent to the failure of communist states (e.g., Yugoslavia),

and the retraction of superpower patronage (eg, Zaire/DRC). The current phenomenon of state collapse can also be viewed as an acute manifestation of a more general and contemporary crisis of the state precipitated by the inequities of globalisation under neo-liberalism, privatisation, and the growing influence of transnational organisations (Cooper 2002).

The decline of superpower military aid and its patronage in general is salient in explaining the collapse of the Zairian state. The post-independence period in the DRC was quite shaped by the international context of Cold War rivalry. In order to secure access to Congo minerals, the US and European powers financed the Mobutu regime during the Cold War. Thanks to the (neocolonial) patronage, Mobutu was able to carry out a patrimonial form of state inherited from the colonial period, in which he maintained his power and influence through a monopoly of state resources, disbursed as rewards for political support through a network of patron-client relations. Beginning in the late 1980s, the practice of patrimonialism came under growing stress; declining internal resources and new conditions for external patronage announced the end of broad-based patronage networks in large parts of Africa (Reno 1995). The nation-state model of development in Africa may have aimed at national unity and integration, but the way in which resources were distributed and power was consolidated sparked competition over dwindling resources. At a global level, the relatively stabilising role the Cold War played in relation to the national development project and the postcolonial ordering of the globe had abruptly ended by early 1990s (Berger 2000). With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of Soviet Empire in the 1989, which announced the end of the Cold War, the US and Europeans had no reason to continue helping the Mobutu regime which had degenerated into an increasingly dysfunctional and plundering establishment. The lack of internal legitimacy for Mobutu's regime was compensated for by the support received from the West and by the fact that he was granted access to international aid channels. With the suspension of Cold War support, the Zairian state simply collapsed.

As Marysse (2004) put it, while there is now a broad academic consensus on the significance of political factors in Africa's crisis, there is less agreement on the role of foreign aid and its influence on political elites and economic regress. Indeed, Van de Wall contends that it is not so much the magnitude of aid as the way in which it is managed that is disruptive and has diminished the state's capacity to run its own affairs (Van de Wall 2001). De Wall thinks that the management of aid is as problematic as the volume of aid itself. However, what Van de Wall fails to explain is why instability and violence have increased in the post-Cold War era.

In his work, Robert Bates (2001) tries to go beyond explaining the crisis to describing how crisis leads to conflict. For Bates, to study the political economy of development is indeed to study prosperity and violence. Bates finds an intrinsic link between the prevalence of violence (including the economic violence of

predation) and regression in the economic arena. What Bates does not explain is why violence and economic regress seem to be occurring in Africa more commonly and on a larger scale since the fall of The Berlin Wall. If the state collapses and wages become insignificant while social security is non-existent, and city dwellers can no longer rely on use-value production, how can people survive? In the Congo, this predicament eventually led to Africa's first international war⁶. The collapse of the Congolese state meant that the military was no longer being paid. Consequently, they stopped functioning as an army and began to exact money from the population. The combination of this and the spill over of the Rwandan civil war into Zaire spelled the end of the state in former Zaire. But, in most analyses, little grounding is provided as to what actually lies behind the breakdown of public authority in the DRC. And such grounding appears more necessary than ever when looking at the continually problematic nature of the state in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, a continent beset with endemic warfare.

The academic discussion of state failure and state collapse seems also situated in a growing deadlock between classical state-centred approaches, which keep pointing to functional problems, and more social insights that try to explain other political and economic loyalties emerging in the context of weak state performance. While contradictory explanations abound on what causes states to collapse or fail, little is said about the new social arrangements that lie behind the evident disintegration of the state.

Most importantly, most scholars seem to have an ideal view of statehood and its derivatives that is based on a unidirectional interpretation of modernity, largely contested by facts on the ground. Indeed, for the discourse on state failure and state collapse, viable states are an entirely unexamined and uncritical normative good. Three principal misconceptions have led the literature on state failure or state collapse.

First, the idea of state failure itself is misleading. It gives the false impression that if a state is now falling apart, it may be assumed to have been previously well-integrated, fully functional, stable, and efficacious. Nowhere in Africa has the state approached the Weberian ideal because the Weberian project is a rigidified form of social relations emanating from a particular, local and context-specific construction from a certain historical period in the West.

There is no general formula for the success of state projects. They always have to respond to local historical specificities (i.e., the conditions and relations of struggle). The DRC state remains profoundly contingent; it was born in a colonial carve-up, and threatened from independence by secessionist movements at the provincial level (Jackson 2004). The DRC was partitioned by war from 1998 to 2003. Now, and in spite of elections, the DRC is in an unprecedented status of neither war nor peace. Thus, statehood ought to be regarded as a

relative concept (Tull 2003). The historical specificities of the North Kivu region and the socio-political particularities of the Nande transnational formation illuminate something crucial and potentially decisive for the DRC as a whole, and perhaps also for the relation of sub-Saharan Africa to the global regime of capital accumulation.

Second, there is confusion between institutional breakdown and society collapse. Zartman (1995) draws an equation between the collapse of the state and the collapse of society and thinks that in a weak society, there exists a general inability to refill the institutional gaps left by withering government structures. Therefore, he concludes that the organisation and allocation of political assets easily fall into the hands of warlords and gang leaders who often make use of ethnic elements as sources of identity and control in the absence of an overriding social contract that binds citizen to the state. Society and the state are placed on a developmental continuum, where one stage of failure almost automatically leads to another. Indeed, collapse of government does not necessarily mean collapse of governance. It means the emergence of new political complexes; new forms of domination may emerge around the introduction of new frameworks of political and economic accountability and control (Doornbos 2002), but so may new forms of contestation and autonomy.

Third, some humanitarian theorists understand “state collapse” as a kind of “development malaise” to be reversed by a combination of smart sanctions, external assistance and institution-building. More often, these interventions involve a radical shift in the political and economic structures of the societies that stand on the receiving end, including, on occasion, the wholesale take-over of a number of services traditionally associated with the functioning of the modern state (Clapham 2002; Ottaway 2002). As Duffield argues:

Rather than the developmental rhetoric of scarcity or breakdown, one has to address the possibility that protracted instability is symptomatic of new and expanding forms of political economy; a function of economic change rather than a developmental malaise. It is difficult for development models of conflict to convey such a sense of innovative expansion (Duffield 1998:51).

This brings us to the even more important question of whether or not real capitalist development on the margins of a troubled centre is possible.

Generally, the analyses of African states in terms of state failure or state collapse overlook the internal dynamics of communal conflict. They neglect the change in the definition and negotiation of power and authority at the local level. The issue of “state collapse” needs to be placed in its specific social setting. In the Nande region of eastern DRC, for example, new forms of governance have taken root in the gap left by the state. The questions then are, “how do state and non-state actors, local and external forces interact to produce order and authority

in a situation where the state has vanished? What sorts of actors are involved? What strategies are used? How stable, extensive and productive are various forms of order and authority? Whose interests are served? Whose interests matter? How is the community being reconstructed and into whose image? The following pages will answer these questions by arguing for the continued importance of more informal ways of creating political order and economic management in sub-Saharan Africa.

This claim is not so much a reaffirmation or a rejection of the African state, but the result of a detailed analysis of societal responses to processes of state implosion, as well as elementary insights into the working of authority and the actors engaged in its formulation.

The Role of Informality in the Restructuring of the State

The practices of transgressing state borders and institutions are usually qualified as an economy of fraud, a dimension of what is referred to as informal economy. Morris and Newman have established criteria with which to distinguish what they call the official market, characterised by trading authorised (licensed) partners: compliance with official market regulations, conformity to official prices. The parallel market is characterised as trading by unauthorised (unlicensed) partners: non-compliance with official marketing regulations, trading at non-official prices. Referring to Indonesian informal trade, Sinkin talks about a considerable part of its foreign trade which escapes official record (Sinkin 1974:157). What distinguishes informal economy from the formal one is the absence of statistics, trade documents and a disregard for norms and regulations. In the early 1980s, with the weakening of the state's administrative capacities in Zaire, MacGaffey (1987) noted that various class sectors began to compete for the appropriation of the surplus. What then emerged is what William Reno (1995) calls the informal market, while MacGaffey discerns a second economy. The concept of informal market or second economy refers to economic activities that are unmeasured and unrecorded except by those immediately involved in each transaction. These activities are carried out in a manner to avoid taxation or deprive the state of revenue.

There are activities supposedly controlled by the state but which in fact either evade this control or involve the illegal use of state positions. By this definition the second economy is as much a political as an economic phenomenon. It is a manifestation of class struggle as well as of coping strategies to deal with economic exigency (MacGaffey 1987:23).

The second economy is different from what is usually referred to as the informal sector, which deals with the self-employment of the urban poor and the migrant population (Sethuraman 1976). Informal sector means the sector of small scale

merchants who follow no regulations and are not controlled by the state. However, for De Villers, there is not one form, but multiple forms of legality. There is no absence of institutions, but these economic agents refer to institutions which are different from those of the modern state. There are multiple and competing regimes of legality or normative existence that coexist within a space of multiple solidarities or sovereignties. Neither is MacGaffey's second economy identical with what AbdouMalik Simone (2004) describes in terms of people as infrastructure. He refers to the extensive transactional economy that has developed from the range of tactics urban African residents use to deflect constraint, surveillance, and competition and from the sociality employed to increase access to information, destinations and support. The second economy goes beyond the coping strategies generated by the intensifying immiseration of African urban populations, however. It should not be reduced to a survival economy or an economy uniquely concerned with those who could not otherwise compete in the world market.

In society-centred analyses, with a focus on the autonomy of informal markets, the second economy tends to be considered an effect of survival strategies. For state-centred approaches, informal markets signal dysfunction. Individual entrepreneurs are still bound to the state because they still live within its monetary circuit. Thus, "Where MacGaffey finds an 'indigenous bourgeoisie' with interests contrary to 'the parasites' of the state machinery, others observe a Mafia-like relation between informal market business and officials who sell protection" (Reno 1995: 5). State-centred studies focus on the predatory state as the responsible agent for the economic crisis that causes citizens to seek relief from bad policies, opting even for war as a mode of accumulation. If in Zaire the collapse of institutions prompted individual entrepreneurs to seek alternative means of survival, then MacGaffey's autonomous entrepreneurs are evidence of a people's capacity to reshape society, not only in the wake of the declining "predatory Zairian state", but also in the wake of outright disintegration of the war-torn DRC. Not only in the presence of predation and parasitism, but also in the absence of any effective state and national government, have Nande traders managed to build self-sustaining prosperous transnational economic enterprises in the eastern Congo. The stakes of this research are defined by showing the actual meaning of the dynamic social forces and informal networks in terms of producing "new social arrangements", especially where African states have been limited in producing them (Bratton 1989).

In Africa, the majority of the population lives from socio-economic activities of the so-called informal economy. During the colonial and post-colonial period, Nande people who felt marginalised from the central government (Macgaffey 1987) resorted to these activities to claim their social rights and to construct an alternative to the existing political and social project. Nande's informal or parallel

economic activities are deployed in local, regional and transnational markets. If international exchange is concerned with transactions between nation-states, then transnational trade goes beyond state systems. Nande trade is organised in networks and some of its practices are informal.⁷ Their trading activities are deployed in local, regional and transnational markets. Nande traders never qualified their activity as being illegal. They argue that legibility and illegibility, legality or illegality conjure the false impression of a state functioning normally.⁷ The Zairian state failed its people, they reason, so the notion of illegality no longer applied because there was and still is no working state. Similarly, the customs service agents who are bribed consider it normal to keep the money. For some traders, as long as value was being returned to the region, there was no reason to worry about ‘illegality’ in a corrupt and predatory government (Marysse 2000).

Mbembe (1992) points out, that illegal networks are not only strategies for survival but also a space of resistance against the violence generated by the failure of the postcolonial modes of accumulation, state dictatorship and its distorted episteme of leadership. Indeed, illegality, as De Genova puts it, makes sense only within the framework of a nation-state which produces laws that legalise or illegalise particular practices (2002). As categories, illegality, informality or even criminality are *forms* of social relations in the course of being objectified, and subject to the dynamics of historical struggle over their composition, decomposition and recomposition (Holloway 1995, De Genova 2002, 2004, Kwansingan s.d.). For some traders, likewise, it seems that new forms of social relations generated by new political and historical contexts constitute their particular space of informality or illegality. It is indeed within these grey zones of legality and illegality that Nande trading activities reshape and re-invent the state.

This chapter has aimed to show that the images of strife, dissolution, corruption, hideous forms of ethnic factionalism and hatred, and overall general horror that dominate the writings of social scientists who specialise on the DRC, as well as representations of the DRC in the media, come from a particular way of conceiving the state and the concept of sovereignty attached to it. The dominant conception of the state against which the DRC is judged is that of a top-down ordered state characterised by legibility (everything is knowable through codifying procedures such as census and population registration), abstraction (everything is part of abstract mass that the state ultimately can and should regulate), singularisation (assigning each individual a fixed location in time and space), and simplification. This way of looking at the state has only two paradigms for operation: legality or illegality. Locating the Nande in the space between the legal and the illegal, the legible and the illegible, brings to light the intellectual productivity of redefining the borders of the modern state, and also challenges the notion that sovereignty is intrinsically attached to the state.

Non-state Sovereignities

The absence of a national set of laws or interests does not mean that there are no rules governing society. Working against the Hobbesian understanding of the pre-state situation as an anarchic and disorganised powerless vacuum, for instance, Evans Pritchard famously characterised the *Nuer* as organised anarchy. Rather than recapitulating the primordial notion of a kind of social order that ostensibly endures from the condition that Hobbes and others depicted as a state of nature, the task of critical social analysis is to discern possible and historically specific conditions for producing socio-political arrangements. Hansen and Stepputat (2006), for example, claim that a key feature of the colonial world was that different registers of sovereignty coexisted and overlapped. Likewise, in many postcolonial societies, sovereign power is historically fragmented and distributed among informal but effective networks of local authority.

Relations and interactions between the interdependent subjects of local and translocal networks have intentionally or unintentionally led to a certain type of governance in the absence of a central government, to a kind of sovereignty outside of the state. The state has not vanished entirely, but some of its major functions – monopoly of violence, redistribution of resources, and a certain level of political representation – have been taken over, by an alliance of traders, the Catholic Church, and the militias.

Nande traders still operate within the territorial jurisdiction of the DRC state. Their schools are accredited by the central government. Their doctors and lawyers receive permission to practice from the central government. Indeed, the Nande traders are enthusiastic about the reconstruction of the national state. This study shows that several sovereignities and property right systems coexist side by side. However, this multiplicity is inconceivable for those with a normative view of governmental institutions and state sovereignty. To make sense of the current situation in the Nande region, one has to integrate a longer historical perspective, and decipher the continuities of the political economic order in the Congo. The current situation in the DRC is one with no single centre. Interlocking, competing, fragile centres of military might, welfare concerns, as well as ethno-religious and local loyalties claim sovereignty over the people. This web of power ties is set against a particular fiction of the state that claims legal sovereignty and a monopoly over violence and reacts in the name of national and popular will.

The debates about sovereignty in political science and history tend to be oriented around the notion of national sovereignty. The concept of national sovereignty has remained hegemonic and has been routinely and notoriously used by dictators to suppress all forms of internal demand for reform. However, some scholars have examined the constructed nature of sovereignty claims (Agamben 1995, 1998, 2003, 2005) as well as the character of such claims in developing countries (Roitman 2001; Clapham 1996; Jackson 1990).

Giorgio Agamben situates his reflections on sovereignty in a kind of juridical limbo he calls the state of exception. For Agamben, it is precisely in its deliberations over the exception that the sovereign power of the state is constituted. He shows how the state of exception is normalised and arrangements are extended not despite but because they are devoid of “distinction between outside and inside, exception and rule, licit and illicit” (Agamben 1997:110). In his *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Agamben defines the politicisation of bare life, the reification of human life in the political realm, as the defining element of sovereign power (Agamben 1995). To understand Agamben’s point, it is important to read his work through Marx, as did De Genova (2008), distancing⁸ himself from the pervasive tendency to fetishise power as synonymous with domination, and from sovereignty as an exclusive right of the state.

The rampant concept of power is the one defined as *potestas* – the unchallenged authority of a despotic ruler. It is the power of the sovereign state that captures and cannibalises its subject. In rejecting a focus on sovereignty and state, Foucault (1996:93) contends that the latter are merely endpoints or crystallisations of relation of power that are understood to be ubiquitous and elemental and therefore must be seen from the bottom-up. Power as *potestas* is the state of exception where the sovereign power of the state gives itself the right to dehumanise its subjects and turn their lives into bare life.

Power as *potestas* is opposed to power as *potentia*, the more elementary power through which human subjects deploy their productive capacities and possibilities. Power as *potentia* is the sort of power Foucault is concerned with when he writes, “Power is something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised [...] Relations of power [...] have a directly productive role, wherever they come into play. Power comes from below” (Foucault 1976:94). This sort of power – *potentia* – which, according to De Genova, (2008) is an elementary facet of human possibility and productive capability, is ontologically prior to and ultimately autonomous of the reified power of the sovereign state that captures it.

The category of bare life is not a simple biological given that ontologically precedes sovereign power, as if in a state of nature, but rather a “product of the [bio-political] machine” (Agamben 2003; De Genova 2007:14). The ideal for Agamben is a “life in which it is never possible to isolate something such as bare life”. The ideal life is no less than a restitution of human life to its own intrinsic, sovereign (inalienable) power, in a way that effectively suspends and transcends the very distinction between legal and illegal, and which thereby inhabits precisely the zone of similarity where their opposition collapses (De Genova 2008). De Genova conceives the notion of sovereignty as an ontological attribute of the human species, anterior to state sovereignty. From this standpoint, sovereignty is never a monopoly of the state.

It is, therefore, possible to adapt the notion of sovereignty to entities such as the Nande traders or other social formations. This study shows that several sovereignties and property right systems can coexist side by side. This idea is inconceivable for those with a normative view of governmental institutions and state sovereignty. Sovereignty is not just a feature of a state's relation to other states, but also a social relation between the state and its own diverse population of ostensible citizens. Even when something close to the Weberian ideal, of statehood emerges, with a state exercising a monopoly over legitimate violence and serving as a guarantor of social order, the state organisations are still likely to be confronted with parallel or rival organisations that claim authority over certain domains of governance.

For Janet Roitman (2001), these domains of governance are not necessarily divorced from state power. Roitman, whose work considers the emergence of transnational regimes of accumulation and authority dominating the borders of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and the Central African Republic, contends that even though "this situation seems oppositional, it does not necessarily imply the demise of [the] nation-state in the face of non-national forms of accumulation and power" (Roitman 2001:241). Even though there is antagonism or competition between state regulatory authority and other regional economies, Roitman argues that complicity is also evident insofar as the state is dependent upon these regional economies for rent and means of redistribution. The transnational activities Roitman describes along the Chad Basin are conducted with the complicity of the state regulatory authorities. These activities are adopted by the state as new ways of thought and action inscribed in the same logical order as the nation-state. Thus, in her account, the networks and domains often described as new spaces of sovereignty or emergent sovereignties are simply new configurations of state-sanctioned power. In other words, the question of their discrepant sovereignty is irrelevant.

In the case of transnational networks in the Chad basin, Roitman contends that the state is never absent. Therefore, these historically contingent economic practices do not represent new sovereignties in their own right. Roitman views this illegal cross-border trade as a form of political technology constituting that which is to be governed as a conscious regulatory intervention (Roitman 1998). In the fashion of Foucault, Roitman sees informal business as a creative way the existing state is metamorphosing. Roitman also cautions that instead of looking at the emerging new figures of power as destabilising our manner of thinking and exercising power, or forcing us to question whether or not new types of sovereignty are in our midst, we should ask whether or not the intelligibility of the very idea of sovereignty has been destabilised with recent changes in the global political economy (2001:263).

While it is true that state agents might be implicated in transnational networks of trade, bringing back the presence of the state in a very peculiar way, it also remains true that these networks challenge the claims of the state as guarantor of social order and wealth redistribution. These challenges are more or less rigorous depending on the ranking of the state agent who participates in the new modes of economic extraction and redistribution outside the state scheme. Therefore, the state in Africa is not failing, but new modalities of its “re-appropriation” are emerging. Power and regulations are re-made and they complexly develop outside the state. However, contrary to Roitman’s view, new configurations of regulations are not really part of the state building process. The level of suffering in the region of the Chad basin is so high that anybody who is familiar with the region would question Roitman’s conclusions. In the DRC, where the state has liberalised and abandoned its extractive power, the competing groups of Nande traders monopolise the surplus produced in their region, and have been able to dispel state agents through bribery and corruption. With the civil war, the state no longer provides protection and security, so its presence is less needed and easily sidestepped by the traders who organise their own militia groups to assume a coercive function. Here, one can see a case of an effective sovereign entity. Nande are indeed surrounded by lots of suffering due to the war, but the Nande networks, by reinvesting in and (re)producing their community, make things much better than Roitman’s informal regulators on the border of Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria.

Roitman seems to stick to a kind of crystallised notion of the state. She reserves sovereignty as an attribute of the state instead of viewing it as social relation for which the state is an objectivised form at a certain point in time. Sovereignty should be seen as that which is inalienable in the human species. This way of apprehending sovereignty is much closer to the anthropological appreciation of power as *potentia*. State power has indeed alienated the sovereign productive power of human beings taken collectively. The above interpretation of sovereignty can be adapted to the Nande as a social formation assuming its destiny by deploying its productive economic and political imagination. This study is not about the Nande as a naturalised ethnic group, but rather about the historically specific social formation that Nande traders have produced and organised around the reconfiguration and mobilisation of kinship and ethnic ideologies and practices of “Nande-ness” – an ensemble of social relations, in which human productive powers and creative capacities are paramount. This imaginative deployment could, of course, turn into an egotist way for the ascendant Nande capitalist class to realise their sovereign power so that the surrounding communities, or even the Nande labouring classes, are excluded and exploited. Nonetheless, the question of the sovereign status of the networks and new domains of governance is relevant. Indeed, there is always a need for interactions between different sites of sovereignty. Multiple layers of distinct sovereignties coexist with the state as they

intersect, reinforce or compete with each other. The intelligibility of each instance of sovereignty is fully deployed only in its relation to others.

The spatial framework of various contentions about state and sovereignty and the inevitable territorial orientation of various projects of state power have required a construction of sovereignty made in the state's image: territorial sovereignty (Ferguson 2006:51). The "local," however, ought not to be interpreted singularly or exclusively in territorial terms, but rather as a point of convergence for various dynamics (Hannerz 2003). In particular, the local involves a "political arena" where different sovereignties are constantly constructed and deconstructed and competing spheres of power (as *potentia*) are forged and intersect (Kassimir 2001). The new production of sovereignty that informs this conception of the local challenges the notion that sovereignty is only relevant as state sovereignty within its territory. Thus, the question of frontiers and their transgression can be seen anew.

The Question of Frontiers

As Birmingham (1992) puts it, frontiers are not barriers but privileged zones of intense economic activity. Degree of illegality, the scale of tax-avoidance and the perceived price to be charged for risk involved will accentuate this intensity. Frontiers are also ideal spaces for rent-seeking, thanks to national disparities between different economic and fiscal system (Renard and Picouet 1993). Frontiers have traditionally played an important role in defining trade patterns in the form of pre-colonial communal and geographical divisions, in colonial frontiers, and in post-colonial borders. The Nande region is indeed located on the old trade roads. The origins of contemporary "informal" trans-border activities can be found in pre-colonial trade patterns. For John Igue (1983), today's informal economic networks in West Africa, for example, are nothing other than the manifestation of the old exchange networks set up by African communities, whose caravan trade was temporarily paralysed by the laws of the colonial economy⁹. Indeed, parallel trans-border trade then resumed or continued after Independence in Africa. Two main forces stimulated these cross-border activities: a) the persistence of porous borders; and b) the continuous harassment – in form of predatory state officials, customs duties – and the opportunities of monetary exchange across borders.

State repression against these cross-border activities produced the phenomena of smuggling and intermediary activities existing on the various African borders (Prunier 1983; Sundstrom 1974). Omer Mirembe (2005) also locates the origins of the Nande's trans-border economy (and their colonial trade patterns) in Central Africa with the inter-lacustrine caravan trade. According to Mirembe (2005) and Raeymaekers (2007), the Nande migrations from the seventeenth century onwards

were apparently connected to the development of a vast salt trade, which was exploited in the Lake of Katwe, situated on the eastern side of the Semliki Valley. Salt was an important cooking ingredient in the Kivu Mountains and was therefore in high demand, as also for the preservation of meat and fish in the absence of freezers. Elder Nande people recall that small caravans of around fifty traders crossed the dangerous Semliki plain in the search of salt from their former Hima kings on a regular basis. Because of the dangers related to this trade and because of the importance of salt, the search for it became an extremely prestigious enterprise that ensured traders access to social and political status, as well as to brides (Vwakyanakazi 1982). Butembo was a stop over on the road of salt for these caravans (Mirembe 2005:115-116).

The trading activities developing along the borders did not only change the social status of people involved, but it also gave them a new sense of periphery. These activities were located in the “shadow” of the colonial and postcolonial administrations, and the frontiers remained a space where goods and articles passed unnoticed. From the 1960s, cash crops such as coffee, tea or papaya latex and some consumer goods imported into the Congo, were smuggled systematically into neighbouring Uganda by Israeli and Indian traders who used the services of armed guards to secure their trans-border activities. These activities expanded so quickly that by 1987, it was estimated that between 30 and 35 per cent of the coffee produced in North Kivu was smuggled to the Ugandan border. Half of the minerals produced in the region followed the same routes to the same destinations. According to Callaghy (1984:284), “almost everything produced or sold in North Kivu was smuggled into Rwanda and Uganda: coffee, vegetables, palm oil, gold, cattle and goat skin, and small merchandise of all kinds.” In the 1990s, when the Congo was severely hit by economic crisis, the Nande, and not only the traders, had no other choice than to unreservedly embrace and enthusiastically extend such trans-border activities.

However, given the context of group relations between the two countries, rather than borders, it is important here to talk about boundaries – the point at which “something become something else,” the point at which the way things are done changes and certain rules of behaviour no longer obtain and/or take hold (Migdal 2004). Boundaries also include important symbolic and social dimensions. Understood this way, boundaries may be described as social constructions, which are themselves replete with tension and conflict, and also reflect other spatial and social logics than those of the colonial or even post-colonial state. The Nande trans-border smuggling networks and their collective efforts of lawbreaking and economic enterprise suggest a renewed spatial logic that produces a personal sense of belonging and identity running parallel, and sometimes in opposition, to dominant state logics. The Nande trans-border trade seems to provide evidence of what is known as market integration, – that which

people brought about for themselves outside official system. The latter had indeed failed to bring economic development to the region by imposing massive tariffs, border controls, and by the state's predatory behaviour in various profitable economic enterprises. It is generally understood that the Nande reacted against the predatory government machineries that had actively denied the realisation of their economic and political rights (MacGaffey 1987). This gives a new light to what is known today as the Nande's informal, parallel or second economy. This indeed raises the important question of a local primitive accumulation. Can the second economy constitute the more viable basis of capitalist development or give rise to a peripheral primitive accumulation?

Development at the Margins or Peripheral Primitive Accumulation

The question arises as to whether the global processes of primitive accumulation hinder local ones or not. Do peripheral capitalists (in this case, the Nande bourgeoisie) help or hinder the larger (global) project of primitive accumulation (namely, the expropriation of the peasantry and the creation of a landless proletariat)? These questions are indeed central to the debate on development in Africa.

Neo-liberalism's apostles – victors in the battle against socialism and Keynesianism – proclaim that development could emerge in Africa and in the Third World in general, only with the removal of what they called state impediments. They argue that development, more precisely primitive accumulation would take off if prices were right, the state stayed in the backseat, and foreign trade and investment were encouraged more than ever before (Moore 2004).

Primitive accumulation consists of three closely related processes¹⁰. First are the processes by which an emerging bourgeoisie accumulates its initial stock of capital in the midst of a disappearing mode of production. In the case of Nande traders, pre-capitalist modes of production have not disappeared completely. There is what Pierre Philippe Rey calls an articulation of two modes of production: capitalist and non-capitalist. Nande traders rely on customary relations of production to extract gold or to produce cash crops such as coffee, but bring their product to the capitalist market. In other words, the stock gained by the new bourgeoisie, partly from the old modes of production it is replacing and partly from parts of the world other than its home, enables a semi-proletarianised labouring class to produce surplus value for its new rulers.

Second, the means by which a free proletariat is created severs people's ties to pre-capitalist tenure, work relations and mode of management and authority. In return for their labour the members of the new working class are paid monetary wages. Some of the commodities made for capitalists thus assist its reproduction

through consumption. For example, increasing proportions of food and shelter, previously produced solely within a non-capitalist mode and for subsistence or barter, are now alienated from this partially transformed class and have to be purchased from the capitalists who stole them.

The third component of this process allocates members of society the right to buy their independent means of subsistence. The collective rights to land in previous modes of production, largely taken by force by the emerging bourgeoisie, are transformed into private rights freely transformed by monetary exchange. This opportunity only benefits a very small minority of the displaced people. In fact, ideologies accompanying primitive accumulation deceptively celebrate small yeoman-type farmers replacing feudal landowners as a gain in individual liberties, including the right to enter and exit employment.¹¹ With the commodification of labour and land comes freedom for their (labour and land) purchase and sale, which is celebrated by those bemoaning the coercion inherent in these social relations within previous systems of production. But the vast majority of people, (including the customary and intellectual elites) who are dispossessed not only from land but also from the social surplus extracted in the region, are prone to remember them fondly (i.e., the communal rights and privileges of the ties to the land and the guarantees of work therein).

Yet there are now tensions within the dominant development discourses about the role of the state in primitive accumulation processes. For over a quarter of a century, neoliberalism has delegitimised African states agents of primitive accumulation, deriding them as repositories of rent-seekers – protective cabals for ruling classes capable only of conspicuous consumption. The ‘primitive’ forms of accumulation demonstrated by Third World elites, including corruption, are frequently not productive because wealth gained in these processes is not attachable to ‘free’ labour, or available means of production¹². However, by now, the promise of the immediate post-Cold War era has not materialised and the problems of this inherently conflict-ridden process have become increasingly evident. Local or global, the contemporary developmental state or region must simultaneously promote the bloody process and ameliorate its many devastating consequences. The Nande case and its transnational dynamism seem to display the emergence of a region increasingly pursuing capitalist development. But, the issue of primitive accumulation cannot be avoided.

In fact, Nande traders do not destroy the old modes of production and create a private property regime in their place. They just trade on the surface of these old modes. They transform them to some extent, but not fully. The process thus remains protracted. This extended process of primitive accumulation is indeed disruptive in many respects - the destruction of old modes of production and the emergence of new ones are by definition disruptive. And in the Congo, this process is complicated further by taking place amidst a civil war.

This study shows that the peripheral processes of primitive accumulation are not merely destructive but also creative. Class forces within these mixtures of social relations produce new collective organisations, augmenting beneficial processes, resisting harmful ones, and reinventing traditional ones. The creation of new Nande capitalist classes (MacGaffey 1987) is, however, not followed by a transformation of relations of production. The dominant class and the existing elites, including the Catholic Church, are by far the main agents and beneficiaries of primitive accumulation processes. Neoliberal globalisation may be quickening this process, but it is also exaggerating its unevenness (Harvey 2000).

These processes of primitive accumulation leading to capitalist development co-exist with other modes of production around the world. Nande traders evolve in a global neoliberal environment. In other words, in today's primitive accumulation, the ruling class is globalised (Sklair 1997), and they work with (and sometimes against) local warlords or bourgeoisie. This class, in the case of the Nande people, was made up of people who, despite the war, strove to maintain self-sustaining and prosperous transnational enterprises, as well as individuals who captured the surplus produced not only in Butembo, but also in the surrounding war zones. Indeed, the Nande, other local producers, and traders are only one connection along the global nexus that finally links this devastating violence to apparently far-removed and ostensibly clean transnational capitalist enterprises, which themselves are inevitably another product of the colonial legacy.

Notes

1. Failed state is defined by the non-performance of key state functions (Zaetman 1995).
2. Manuel Castells provides a partial exception in his three-volume work on globalisation, which includes some discussion of Africa. Castells M. *End of Millennium*, Vol. 3, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and culture*, Oxford-Blackwell, 1998, pp. 70-128
3. Coltan is the generic name of Columbite-Tantalite, a black mineral found in Brazil, Australia, and Canada, with the majority of the world's remaining reserves in the DRC. It occurs in ancient rock formations known as granitic pegmatites, where eroded rock has been deposited by water. The pegmatites crystallise slowly and retain a great deal of water and are often enriched with rare elements and gemstones such as topaz and tourmalines. Riverbeds and alluvial deposits are the main source in the Congo. Coltan found in these formations is largely composed of two rare elements: niobium and tantalum. Even though it is difficult to purify – hence its name – the pure metal was tantalising to the eyes but always out of reach (one purified, tantalum is a hard, gray metal that can easily be drawn into wire or deformed without breaking). 4 million pounds of tantalum are consumed worldwide each year in the form of metal powder, wire, fabricated forms, as well as compounds and alloys used in cell phone, computer, and video game components. Coltan miners earn US \$ 450 per week when the average Congolese worker can expect per month. In the DRC, a team of miners can extract a kilo of coltan per day. In 1998 the price of coltan was US \$40 per kilo, but then it spiked

up to 4400 in 2000 and has hovered around US \$ 100 ever since, with demand only increasing. According to Jason Perkinson, an IndyMediaUK journalist 80 per cent of Congo coltan arrives at the sons of Gwalia in Australia for processing. Then the tantalum is sold primarily to Germany's Bayer subsidiary H.C. Stark and American company Cabot, which in turn make capacitors for customers such as Alcatel, Compaq, Dell, IBM, Ericson, Nokia and Siemens. The price picked up in 2000 because Sony launched Play station 2 and a new generation of mobile phones. The British MP Oona King writes; “Kids in Congo are being sent down into mines to die so that kids in Europe and America can kill imaginary aliens in their living rooms” (cf. Bush and Seeds 2008, *Apocalypse Found: Coltan, Cell Phones and Crisis in the Congo*, CommonDeams.org, April 19, 2008, published by The Bear Deluxe Magazine).

4. From a Hegelian perspective, Kantian categories are hard, rigid, absolutely separated from one another (Kant I. [1781-1787], *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Werner S. Pluhar; introduction by Patricia Kitcher; Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hachett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996, p.132, Categories).
5. This appearance of rigidity, stability, and fixity is what Marx would characterise as fetishisation, or in DeGenova's gloss, reification.
6. Berger (2000) talked about the first African World War because more than six different national armies participated in this conflict inside the Congo. The only comparable antecedent was the Angolan war of independence from 1975, which involved the armies of Cuba and apartheid South African into the conflict.
7. MacGaffey refers to the ‘real economy’ to signify that this is in fact what people live on. For William Johnson (2003), it is the real market to be introduced to the theory of international exchange. In contrast, working on Chad Basin, in Roitman (1990) sees in these activities as an extension of state regulatory mechanisms
8. Nietzsche was known to question his interlocutors' statements with the following interrogative phrase: “by this statement what are you running away from?”
9. “Ce commerce parallele n'était rien d'autre que le nouveau circuit d'echange mis au point par les anciennes communautes... marchandes de l'epoque caravanier dont les activites avaient ete paralyses par les lois de l'economie coloniale” (Igue 1983:38). The translation is mine.
10. Here, I am using Moore's discussion of “The second Age of the Third World: from primitive accumulation to global public good?” (Moore D. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25 (1) pp. 87-109, 2004).
11. Marx's primitive accumulation account allows “free peasant proprietors” to exit under many forms of feudal title. But, these forms will eventually disappear under the pressure of agrarian capitalists (Marx K., *Capital*, Vol. 2).
12. For Marx, ‘what enables money wealth to become capital is the encounter, on one side, with free workers; on the other side, with the necessities and materials, etc, which previously were in one way or another the property of masses who have now become object-less, and are free and purchasable’ (Marx K., ‘The Grundrisse’, in Tucker R., 1978 (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York, Norton, p. 269)

3

The Emergence of Nande: A Socio-political History

About a thousand years ago, indigenous Congo pygmies first welcomed Bantu-speaking groups from the south searching for copper. Five hundred years ago, Arab traders from the east and Portuguese merchants from the West entered the Congo shopping for ivory and slaves. In the 1870s, Belgium's King Leopold II laid claim to the Congo as though it were his personal estate. With the assistance of Anglo-American adventurer Henry Stanley, he negotiated trade rights for a range of goods, including diamonds, gold and rubber. It is generally accepted that Joseph Conrad's Kurtz was modelled on Stanley. The Congo was at the centre of E. D. Morel's campaign to eradicate King Leopold's horrendous criminal gains. His campaign achieved wide global support and shamed Britain's parliament into commissioning a report, which led to Leopold abdicating his personal fiefdom to the Belgium state.¹ The Belgian-Congo was born from the ushers of the Congo Free State, which indeed had been a financial enterprise rather than a colonial state.

Any attempt to understand the dynamics of the colonial enterprise in the Congo needs to be aware of the ways in which the local societies were transformed by European intervention. Prior to 1900, the region had been divided between multiplicities of structures. There were lesser and greater kingdoms. There were also smaller units of people, often organised around village structures, or united in loose federations of people bound together not by acknowledged leaders but by language or ethnicity. The class structure of the Congolese kingdoms involved a paramount chief, numerous chiefs at different levels, and village heads. Authority was a matter of transmitted precepts. Family ties were decentralised from the paramount chief or *Mwami* to minor chiefs and from these to regional heads, and from these to village heads. According to De Boeck (1996), about 70,000 people were ruled this way. During the Belgian-Congo period, ethnic authorities were the only direct relationship most Congolese had with the state, and the rural

Congo was a giant federation of Bantustans (Mamdani 2001). The nature of colonial rule in the Congo militated against a united movement (Mamdani 2001). In this way, the colonialists in power constituted one minority among other minorities (local 'Bantustans') instead of being a minority in front of a majority of united indigenous Congolese.

The Congo was left to the Congolese after about a century of brutal extraction of its resources by the Belgians.² King Leopold's Congo Free State (1885-1908) was a short but barbaric looting enterprise. Even the Belgian-Congo (1908-1960) was not so different. In the Belgian-Congo, profits from mining enterprises were transferred to the metropolis and a minimum tax was paid for the country's education or modernisation. Mining companies needed just a little bit of native organisation to keep the companies running. They were helped by the Catholic Church and the colonial administration. However, the bulk of the profit was drained to the metropolis. One example of Belgian colonial looting during the colonial period is that the uranium used by the Americans to build the bomb they used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki came from Shinkolobwe mining in Katanga. The bill, however, was paid to Belgium through the cancellation of its war debts and not to the Congo as a colony. However, an industrial sector grew in the Congo after World War I, but it was what Justinian Rweyemamu called perverted industrialisation. It was perverted in that technical development decreased the freedom of the Congolese. It was structurally and unequally linked to the metropolitan economy (Amin 1996). Processing became imperative (palm oil, coffee, and indeed raw material processing). Railways were constructed for transportation, consumer goods were produced for the administrative class, these products were either too heavy (cement, beer) or too perishable (newspapers, soap, etc.). During World War I and the subsequent great depression, import substitute industrialisation developed inside Africa, including within the Congo. But it consisted simply of importing the component (beer, soap) and producing locally the finished product. It was also a perverse industrialisation because it was embedding and perpetuating a structure of dependency.

Post-colony

The Congo colony was maintained by Belgium from 1908 until independence was declared in 1960, when nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba came into power. That same year the Congolese army mutinied and declared Katanga, the large mineral-rich south-eastern province, independent. Belgian and American mineral interests supported the Katanga secession that contributed to the downfall of the Lumumba government in 1960 (Luc De Wilde 2000). Lumumba turned to the Soviet Union for help to reunify the country, but 30-year-old Colonel Joseph Desire Mobutu soon led a coup with the backing of Western intelligence agencies (Peck 2001). Mobutu renamed the Congo "Zaire" and for 30 years enriched

himself in a manner similar to King Leopold. The Cold War pro-imperialist dictatorship and its economic hold-up of the country's resources, allocating them as patronage to networks of clients, sustained the same colonial logic of predation. Mobutu proved to be powerful enough to destroy nearly the whole country over the next thirty-five years. Lumumba supporter Laurent Kabila helped organise a secessionist Marxist state in eastern Congo. Educated in France and Tanzania, Kabila was, for a short time in the late 1960s, assisted by Che Guevara, who envisioned a Cuban-style revolution for the Congo, but Guevara politely dismissed Kabila as "not the man of the hour." Two years later, Kabila found the support of the People's Republic of China and launched himself into an era of collective agriculture and mineral smuggling. Kabila's proto-state came to an end in 1988, and he was widely believed to be dead. The 1994 genocide of 800,000 Rwandan Tutsi and moderate Hutu spilled political instability across the border into the Congo, and in 1996, Kabila was resurrected as a national leader and marched triumphantly into the capital city of Kinshasa, overthrowing an ailing Mobutu. Mobutu was ousted in 1997 by Kabila with the help of Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers (Wrong 2000:3). The neo-Mobutist dictatorship of Laurent Kabila quickly transformed the world's most attractive minerals market into a buccaneer industry, enriching himself and his family network at the expense of the Congolese people until the country descended into war in 1998. Within two years, his Rwandan friends turned on him, and he was assassinated by one of his own bodyguards in January 2001. Since then, the country has been ruled by Kabila's son, Joseph. Trained at the National Defense University in Beijing, Joseph Kabila has attempted to remove foreign troops while establishing himself as the "democratically elected" leader of a country roughly the size of Western Europe with over 60 million inhabitants.

Since the mid-1990s, two massive wars have devastated the Congo, leaving 5 million dead, more than any military conflict since World War II. Ever since, the illegal extraction of natural resources in the country only increased. While Kabila's army has reduced the number of troops from neighbouring countries, (including the Sudan, Uganda, Angola and Tanzania), Rwandan Hutu forces called the "*Interahamwe*" and Congolese militias, known collectively as the "*Mai-Mai*," occupy the most violently disputed areas of the eastern DRC, concentrating their activities primarily in locations where mining of gold, diamonds and coltan takes place. "Militias from Rwanda and Uganda may justify invasions on the grounds that they are defending their people against rebels, but they earn billions from the tantalum they collect and smuggle across borders during these raids," writes John Perkins in *The Secret History of the American Empire* (2007).

In 1999, Congo and neighbouring countries signed the United Nations-sponsored Lusaka Accord, ending the first Congo war, and formed the UN mission in Congo (MONUC), which brought UN troops into the country in an

effort to stabilise the region. In 2001, the UN issued a report titled “Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.” Unfortunately, exploitation of resources and the war continued with horrific effects on the civilian population. There have been chronic food shortages and contaminated water supplies, with children being at the greatest risk of starving or succumbing to disease. Families are torn apart, and children are easily recruited or kidnapped into the service of the militias. Females of all ages pay the most terrible price of all, as armed men and boys kidnap and rape mothers, daughters and grandmothers without consequence. Although Joseph Kabila, the country’s would-be leader, is attempting to limit the warfare, documented atrocities against human beings, animals and the environment continue. Joseph Kabila rules in a manner perceived by outsiders as better suited to the dictums of good governance and responsible economic management, yet the country remains war-torn and a premier example of a failed and collapsed state (Moore 2001, 2004; Clapham 2002; Duffied 2001; Ottaway 2002).

Thus, the combination of external factors such as US and West European cynical Cold-War aid to the Mobutu regime to secure control over the Congo’s mineral resources, and internal dynamics, such as the Mobutu regime’s neo-patrimonial policies, followed by wars and successive rebellions, have collided to undermine the framework of the national state and have led to a dramatic and complex fragmentation of coercive power. The war in the Congo in 1996 was not uniquely about minerals as many have contended (Collier 2000; UN Panel of Experts on Illegal Exploitation of the Resources in Congo 2004). The desire to liberate the country from Mobutu’s dictatorship and his mismanagement of the country’s resources was indeed important. Collier (2000) claims that all wars in Africa and the rest of the developing world revolve around crude economics. This creates a conceptual chain of equivalence that looks like ‘war = economics (greed) = developing world politics (grievance)’. Collier is the most outspoken person of the view that those who take up arms in the pursuit of something as abstract as justice or democracy are but charlatans after resources, better to be compared to a mafia don than to George Washington.

Using the result of a quantitative analysis of all civil wars occurring since 1995, Collier argues that factors commonly identified as conflict causes – such as ethnic rivalry, the level of political rights, economic mismanagement, and regime type – have no statistical bearing on the outbreak of civil war. Instead, he finds that economic factors are more salient to the risk of civil war. Collier’s data reveal a high risk of conflict in weak states with deteriorating infrastructure and rich natural resources extracted on a small scale by petty producers. Indeed, those countries with a strong dependency on primary commodity exports and a high number of poorly educated young men tend to fall prey to military-commercial groups engaged in criminal activities. Collier thus, concludes that

objective political grievances have no direct link to the onset of conflict, and where there are accessible natural resources and an ill-educated youth, rebel movements have both a powerful incentive to use violence to acquire wealth and the opportunity and means to do so (2001:14).

The problem with this kind of statistical analysis is that while it is useful for the identification of key variables across a group of cases, at best it generates broad correlations that illuminate only a part of the picture (Ballentine and Sherman 2003:5). There is also in Collier's account, an element of geographical and resource determinism, a one-to-one relationship between the amount of easily portable minerals in the ground and civil war, which makes his theory non-historical, apolitical, and simplistic. Although recent wars in Africa may seem to confirm Collier's view, his focus on micro-economies of wars prevents him from seeing the happy connivance of the multinational corporations in such activities (Dufield 2000). Collier also overlooks the long historical processes by which oppositional movements are turned into social and political forces more akin to warlords than agencies of transformation.

On the other hand, humanitarian discourse focusing on "blood diamonds" may fall prey to a similarly myopic view, calling attention to the role of corporations in one global industry while obscuring all the rest. Focusing on the miniscule percentage of diamonds scratched out of the earth by petty producers who then sell to the closest warlords, and hoping that a global social movement in concert with the United Nations can somehow work with an ethical diamond marketing cartel to stop this trade, humanitarians ignore the huge commodity-based corporations extracting other minerals and timber, who also work with warlords and authoritarian states. The economics of war are not just about the pursuit of profits by warlords or the plundering of one state's resources by another's armies, but about the way in which the international community (euphemism for rich states with the power to impose order on the weaker states in the world) spends its tax revenues on international relief. There seems to be little or no recognition that the first modern warlord to ruin the central Africa in pursuit of ivory and rubber was Belgium's King Leopold (Hochschild 1997). Indeed, genocide was committed by Leopold's regime when ten million people died in the realisation of Leopold's lofty aims. The contemporary discourse on the 'war economy' tends to forget history.

In order to understand the current African predicament, one needs to move away from Clapham's ahistorical culturalist explanations of African barbarism towards a focus on Moore's emphasis on mercantile capitalism, including the slave trade and colonialism. In Moore's view, there was a distortion of the pre-existing 'natural' or 'spontaneous' types of state formation and indigenous capitalist development in Africa.³ Colonialism also stalled indigenous capitalist development by thwarting the development of a strong local bourgeoisie and causing mass

dislocation and conflict through a rapid programme of converting land and labour into commodities (Leys 1994; Moore 2003). It created bifurcated regimes of local despotism in contrast with a faint semblance of urban civil societies (Mamdani 1996). The governing class which took over the colonial state at the moment of decolonisation may not have been inherently more interested in importing, exporting, and rent-seeking than fostering a developmental state, but inheriting an already weak, albeit authoritarian, state in the conjuncture of the Cold War encouraged Mobutu-like politicians to thrive all over the continent (Moore 2003). As William Reno put it, the “shadow state” emerged because state actors could play off the super-powers and other donors against each other rather than cementing capitalist developmental links with civil society. As the state became weaker, its shadow grew longer but also thinner and more dispersed. Contending elites became marginalised and susceptible to the temptation of accumulation through war. Sierra Leone may signal much of Africa’s future, with its combination of grievance and greed in the diamond trade pattern of regional and international intervention, urban/rural divides structured by a long history of class and race, drug addicted child soldiers, and periodic bouts of limited democracy. Indeed, the above description has many parallels across the continent.

This history has fed the modern images of the Congo. But, this is only half of the history. Despite the high overall level of violence of the state, new forms of life have emerged. Indeed, there are stark differences among various local communities in the DRC. Some groups continue to suffer, but others, particularly the Nande in eastern Congo, have managed to build self-sustaining and prosperous transnational enterprises extending as far as the Persian Gulf and East Asia. It is the story of these Nande trading networks that this chapter is concerned with. The study will now turn to the historical processes of the transnational construction of the Nande community. The Nande have emerged as a product of these historical transformations.

Eastern Congo

Eastern Congo has carried the major consequences of the recent fragmentation of the DRC. Ethnic divisions were added to a fragmented coercive power by different rebel groups. The Congo’s estimated 5 million dead during the war (IRC 2006) are mostly from eastern Congo, specifically from the region stretching from Ituri to northern Katanga. Different responses were given to this devastating civil unrest by the population. It ranged from fleeing the country (refugees) or the region (Internally displaced people -IDP) to joining the fight (Mai- Mai) or paying off the rebels for peace. The Nande succeeded in buying peace and carrying on with their business while the state retreated.

The term “state retreat” is used to express the view that the state has not withered away completely. In the context of the DRC, there seems still to be a nation. People define themselves as Congolese and went to vote massively without coercion, even though the United Nations has had to pay an estimated 500 million dollars for the whole process in addition to the one billion dollars it pays each year to maintain its biggest peacekeeping mission in the world.

There is a kind of interplay between forces that contribute to the disintegration of the state and other countervailing forces which seem to make its reconstruction possible. The latter generally include global capital and its caretakers in the UN and various powerful countries with prospective economic interests in the DRC (US, EU, Belgium, etc). Thus, there are compelling forces at work to keep the country in one piece despite its internal dynamics of meltdown and reconstitution into several relatively viable but discrete pieces.⁴ This is a precisely *neo-neo-colonial* logic of state (re-)formation that would privilege a rather large single state despite all the turmoil and conflict that might otherwise break it apart. In this sense, the national state is increasingly *de-nationalised* (Sassen 2006) by dynamics that are simultaneously operating from within and without.

The governor of the province is a Nande who is very much linked to the political economy of Butembo even though his official residence remains in Goma. But who are the Nande who defy the primordial images of Congo as heart of darkness?

The evolution of the Congo, and especially the recent wars have been poorly understood by the West. Western media and social scientists such as Clapham or Kaplan explain the war as something inevitable, evidence of recurrent African backwardness. *The Economist* asked, at the start of the millennium, “Does Africa have some inherent character flow that keeps it backward and incapable of development?” The Congo became for Europeans, a paradigm of Africa, its darkness even greater than the rest of the continent. Yet, behind the million of dead in the Congo wars stood the profits of regional powers and multinational corporations. There is no better example of the modern day plunders than the American Mineral Fields, an American mineral company actively involved in the war-torn Congo. American Mineral Fields (AMF – 11 per cent owned by Union Minière) and Anglo-American signed in 2000 a 60/40 deal with Gecamines to extract cobalt tailings from Musonoi River. Once incensed with Kabila for ignoring their support during the first rebellion (the 1996 rebellion), and then signing a deal with De Beers, AMF became more pragmatic. It also had a 50/50 deal with ZINCOR owned by ISCOR, and Gecamines, to rehabilitate the zinc and copper mine near Lubumbashi. AMF simultaneously supported the rebel movement Rally for Congolese Democracy (RDC), playing both sides in the hope that peace would come along the lines of Lusaka agreement of August 1998. This

situation is not at all new in the history of warfare. In World War II, the Ford Motor company was building engines for the German Fokker planes used by the “enemy’s” airforce.

There is nothing primitive or backward about the Congo, neither is the current period of plunder which has seen commentators rage against the “criminality” of foreign companies and multinationals symptomatic of any “deviant” capitalism. The convergence of “criminal activities” in areas outside the control of “legal” international and national political actors is rather an integral and even defining feature of the new globalised world. The Congo is one example of the frontier of the privatisation process that politicians in the West call ‘reform’ or ‘progress’ (Kennes 2002). The Congo can be seen accurately as prefiguring an essential element of late capitalism, shorn of any of the normal pretences of “modernisation” and “development”. The images of the Congo that dominate the Western media are usually informed by the same speculators and multinationals who survey the Congo without any consideration for development and modernisation of the country. It is indeed fanciful to imagine that multinational corporations properly regulated and controlled can at last bring about the development and investment that will fully redeem the Congo. The pattern of Western intervention and capitalist development in the Congo tells us that this will never happen under present conditions. However, the Nande case reveals that this is only half of the story. By protecting a self-sustained and prosperous transnational enterprise in the midst of the war, Nande traders defied the gloomy images conveyed by the Western media.

Pre-colonial Transformations

Generally, Europeans know very little about Africa and North Americans know even less. This is as true today as it was in the past. Westerners know very little about the complex societies which constituted Africa, especially its central and eastern regions. There was a complex division of labour into chiefs, diviners, doctors and mediums that had evolved in the region by around 100 C.E. Early kingdoms included the empire of Luba founded in the early sixteenth century and based around Lakes Kisale and Upemba in central Katanga in what is now the DRC. The empire of Kongo was founded around the fourteenth century at the mouth of the Congo River and included part of today’s Angola as well as today’s Congo-Kinshasa and Congo-Brazaville (Renton, Seddon and Zelig 2007). In the land of the Kongo, Portuguese traders promoted feuds between neighbours, knowing that any conflict would result in greater numbers of slaves because people captured by each group would be sold to the Portuguese. In the middle of the nineteenth century, *Arabises* (Arabised Africans), Swahili, and Nyamwezi traders from today’s Tanzania penetrated the highlands of the Congo

from the east, and began to trade slaves and ivory. Some traders established their own trading centre. Tippu Tip, also known as Muhammad bin Hamad, an Arabised man from Zanzibar, ruled much of eastern Congo.

In the late 1870s the eastern region of today's DRC remained a patchwork of disparate groups and rulers with no political coherence. Recent historical studies reveal considerable social transformation in the pre-colonial period, discrediting Western inventions such as tribal associations dominated by lineage ideologies and simplistic scenarios of successions of inferior groups by superior groups. The new research suggests more complex dynamics of alliance building and co-opting of lineage groups into political units that are, in turn, often fragmented as a result of struggles over the allocation of resources within or pressure from neighbouring groups. The Nande region has been of particular interest to historians studying such pre-colonial social transformations because the intrusion of the slave trades further accelerated changes, upsetting earlier patterns of alliance building and ritual control by introducing a new form of trade and new terror tactics in the region.

Networks of commercial exchanges traversed this space long before the consolidation of European colonial power. For many centuries, Zanzibar Island was a commercial platform for long distance trade with caravans patrolling sea and land roads. It was also an important site for the development of civilisation. Developing parallel to the slave trade in that part of the world, an African modernity was constructed around the language of Swahili. Salt, animal husbandry, seed, iron, ivory, textiles, pottery, and slaves circulated on these commercial roads through kingdoms, empires and states. Products such as palm oil, potatoes, mangoes, pineapples, rice and coffee were introduced in the Kivus by Swahili merchants and Arabs (Bishikwabo 1987:102). Thus, the Great Lakes region was historically connected to the coastal regions of Africa (Illife 1997:185; Wesseling 1996:181). These connections helped to orient commercial exchanges toward the world market of the Indian Ocean (Chaudhuri 1990:31). But neither Arabs nor the Swahili were the only ones involved in long distance trade in East Africa. Pre-colonial African societies were economically dynamic. Exchange transpired in small markets inside kingdoms and traditional states, but also in trans-local regional markets. In African inter-lakes kingdoms, goods circulated through kinship relations and through the system of relay. A trader would sell his merchandise at a market located on the border of the kingdom; another one would buy and resell the same merchandise far inside the region. In the 19th century, therefore, the network system developed. It was the result of traders or groups of traders organising caravans on roads passing through kingdoms with huge quantities of merchandise and intermediaries. Within the network structure there were professional guides who were very well informed on road safety, climate conditions, and other possibilities of trade negotiations.

The northeast region of the Congo was not really part of this dynamism. However, incursions of Arabs and Arabised Africans took place in some Nande regions. Beni, for instance, was located on the road of caravans coming from Sudan, via the Ituri region, to East African markets (Mbogha Kambale 1975:42). Indian presence is old in East Africa. With the British indentured labour system, thousands of Indians settled in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya as either civil servants or traders. Indian traders were the intermediaries between locals and colonial power (Markovits 1994:423). Some of them, including their descendants and other South Asian immigrants are still very active in the region in terms of trade and industry. Some of these factors are at the heart of what stimulated the future transnational dynamism in North Kivu during and after colonisation: the Swahili language, the existence of trade roads, experience of long distance trade, and the presence of the Indo-Pakistani commercial diaspora in east Africa. The Nande, as a social formation, emerged from these pre-colonial and colonial transnational dynamisms.

The Nande in North Kivu

North Kivu is predominantly inhabited by the Nande in northern Beni and Lubero, and the Banyarwanda (primarily Bahutu and some Tutsi) in Rutshuru and Masisi, and the Hunde in Walikale. There is no linguistic relation between these groups.

The name Nande is of relatively recent origin. Elderly people in the region do not remember the term being used in their youth, and it is thought to have been introduced by the Belgians, or possibly by Arab slave and ivory traders who penetrated the northern Mitumba Mountains region at the end of the nineteenth century. The term *Yira* was used to speak of the Kinande-speaking people in general, but this term took on derogatory connotations during the colonial period, when it was used to refer to backward, uncivilised persons. *Yira* is sometimes used to refer to the lower social strata of the population (Bergmans 1970:8).⁵ Rather than a cultural definition, anthropologists such as Bergmans (1970) and Remotti (1993) see in the term *Yira* a reflection of the Yira's socio-economic status of 'opposition', first against the pastoralist ruling class of the *Hima* (this division is also present in other traditional inter-lacustrine kingdoms, such as Toro, Ankole and Bunyoro) then as agriculturalists in opposition to the land-owning aristocracy (in the Nande's traditional society) and finally as the primitives in opposition to the civilised in the context of colonial society. This status was also traditionally linked to customary authorities' tolerance of others engaging in private commerce. The acceptance of private initiative apparently stimulated a spirit of constructive competition, according to which individuals measured their success with others (Sarata 2002:40). This was in sharp contrast to surrounding communities where the customary chiefs had the tendency to strangle merchant

initiatives. In the Hunde community from Bwiti and Bwisha in North Kivu, for example, a vassal was not allowed to be richer than the local chief (*Mwami*) (Kasay 1988).

The common language used by Nande people – Kinande – is shared by the Konjo people living in foothills of the Ruwenzori Mountains in Western Uganda. Though oral traditions in the region suggest that there were successive migrations from the Ruwenzori region across the Semliki Valley to the Mitumba Mountains since the end of the sixteenth century (Randall Packard 1981)⁶, the *Yira* traced their origin to the kingdom of *Kitara*, in today's Uganda.

The newcomers seem to have introduced new forms of social organisation in the region, which Randall Packard describes:

The Nande system of land tenure may have facilitated their expansion. The Bapakombe and Bapere claim that prior to Nande expansion land was free, to be used by anyone who chose to cultivate it, without obligation to the person who had cleared it. When the Nande arrived they introduced a system of land tenure in which a person who settled on a piece of land that had previously been cultivated was ritually, and thus to a certain extent politically, dependent on the clearer of the land. This system led to the development of patron-client relationships between first occupants (Konde) and later settlers. The emergence of these relationships may have given the Nande settlers an organisational advantage over their forest hosts by providing a means for mobilising support on a territorial basis (Packard 1981:66).

The result, in Packard's opinion, was a social organisation only loosely based on descent, with clans having "very little corporate identity" as they are neither "geographically cohesive, nor are they totemic or exogamous units". The forms of territorial leadership that emerged seem to have been based on ritual control of rainmaking by use of rain stones. This was in turn altered, at least in the Isale region studied by Packard, when Hima-Bito pastoralists (who apparently had been able to survive an earlier famine in the valley) began migrating into the mountain regions during the early part of the nineteenth century. What Packard documented in the Isale region was a history of alliance building, rather than open conflict, whereby pastoralist groups, utilising their cattle as a greater economic resource and co-opting the support of existing ritual leaders (rain chiefs, original clearers of the forest, diviners and healers), were able to broaden spheres of political control. Tribute payments were the primary form of exchange between dominated groups and ruling classes. The rights of the original occupants (Bakonde) continued to be respected, annual tribute payments were maintained, and the ritual authority of rain chiefs continued to be a factor in politics. To this was added a system of tribute payments to the new chiefs (*Bwami*) and an enhanced ideology of their consolidated ritual control over nature and the well-being of society.

The basic principle of a tribute payment was to avoid accumulation at the producer's level beyond the needs for simple reproduction, and to redistribute the surplus to sustain the network of dependent relations. As Van Aker (2005) points out, the result is a complex structure of rights where nobody has complete property rights, but few – if any – have no rights at all. For a peasant family, the system trades social integration, and hence security, for loyalty and tribute to the “*mwami*,” who receives power in exchange for granting non-alienable use rights over the customary domain. The system was not feudal in the sense of social immobility; it allowed social mobility in return for expansion of the collective domain. By clearing virgin land or forest, a man could extend the collective domain while gaining use rights to the cleared land. To the extent that used rights were further divisible, they allowed him to exact tribute, propelling him higher into the hierarchy as the head of new lineage (*mugula*) (Van Aker 2005:82). Even immigrants could obtain access to land as long as they also acquired the status of client. This underscores the basic nature of land as a common good; no social actor can be refused the right to access and use land, as long as they respect the principles that ensure social integration. Nevertheless, political influence in the entire region remained very much in flux. The configurations of political spheres continued to shift with the successes and failures of the efforts of political players building alliances and attempting to legitimise their rule with claims to more effective control over ecological factors (Southall 1953; Salim 1985).

The political climate of the region was being changed as well during the last decades of the nineteenth century by the incursions of Arab slave and ivory hunters based in the Maniema region of Kivu. They raided as far as north Beni, with incursions into the Mitumba Mountains from the Semliki Valley, taking captives to transport ivory back to Maniema. Pitched battles were fought with Karakwezi for control of the region. This competition for export resources and the introduction of firepower had severe effects on the political climate in the area, resulting in the emergence of new political figures who had not cultivated a traditional legitimacy or a network of social alliances. By allying themselves to ivory traders and acquiring firearms, these new leaders were able to introduce new terror tactics into the region, raiding and killing extensively among the Nande. According to Packard's interpretation of this period, the result was the deterioration of the Isale region, with livestock completely disappearing and subsequent famine conditions further increasing the harshness of life. This eventually led to a reaffirmation of traditional claims to authority based on ritual control over ecological factors and forms of alliance building. The end result was the consolidation of the widest political formations in the area during the first two decades of the twentieth century, up to the point when Belgian colonial hegemony was extended over the region in the 1920s.

It is important to note that the *Yira* never seem to have been organised into a centralised government. On the one hand, their community remained historically divided between the Nande and the Kondjo, two branches of the *Yira* community that live respectively in today's DRC and Uganda. On the other hand, the Nande community is also divided between several clans or sub-clans: the Nyisanza, Bashu, Baswagha, Batangi and Bamate. This political dispersion resulted in the maintenance of a certain degree of autonomy even though they were integrated into a single kingdom. For Bergmans (1970), the Nande political system contains in itself the seed of a fragmentation of power. The Nande political system also contained important centrifugal tendencies that were directed more towards expansion and conquest than territorial consolidation (Raeymaeker 2007). This is indeed an illustration that the claim of sovereignty rather than being an expression of a single ruler or actor, finds its expression in the system of codes and rules that govern a particular social domain. In the Nande community, sovereignty was traditionally instituted in two figures: the *Mwami*, the chief, and the '*Mughula*', a kind of anti-power figure that intervenes in crucial phases of the *Mwami*'s life. Indeed, this 'sovereignty' is expressed specifically in the "vast network of tributes" that makes it possible to individuate particular links between different clans and individuals (Remotti 1993:45). This vast network of tributes and relationships finds its contemporary expression in the Nande's economic organisation. Ultimately, the economic activities taking place in the current informal sphere are understood foremost as a particular expression of the social dynamic of the societies that develop them: economic agents mobilise and use resources for economic development in function of their insertion into a plurality of social networks, primarily of family and kin, but also friends, neighbours and other members of the community.

It was in the late nineteenth century that the first Europeans entered the North Kivu region. Henry Stanley passed through Semliki Valley in 1889, and Charles Stokes, a British ivory trader, began operations in the valley during the early 1890s (Packard 1981:140, 144). Prior to this, societies in the Nande region had been very much in a state of flux. Initially, a lineage-dominated social formation had existed, with an incipient class structure based on claims of ritual control over ecological factors: rainmakers received tribute from lineage groups. This was being transformed by the introduction of a social formation based more on territorial control and enforced tribute payments than incorporated political alliances with existing ritual leaders. The penetration of slave and ivory traders, introducing a lucrative export trade economy as well as firearms, brought new tensions into the region. This, however, was interrupted by the advent of European colonising forces struggling among themselves for control over this part of Africa, and forcing significant changes on the inhabitants of the region.

Colonial Intrusion and Social Transformations

Belgian colonial forces first entered the North Kivu in 1897 in pursuit of mutinous troops who had been part of an expedition led by General Dhanis, which had left from Stanleyville (Kisangani) with the goal of securing the northeast frontier of the Congo Free State. Many of the mutineers, known as the Batetela, had been former collaborators with Arab traders before being recruited into the Force Publique (the military force) of the Congo Free State. The mutineers plundered murderously down through North and Central Kivu, joining forces with ivory hunters from Maniema already in the region. Forces in pursuit of the rebels defeated one contingent near Luhanga (in the Batangi chiefdom, an area occupied by Nande people), reportedly killing 400 of them (Bergmans 1970:46; Wack 1905:219-21). Thereafter, Belgian forces defeated Maniema ivory traders operating in the Semliki Valley and built outposts at Katwa, on the northeast corner of Lake Edward, at Kirimi, on the southern slopes of the Ruwenzories and at Beni, west of the Semliki River (Packard 1981:140).

The border between British claims on Uganda territory, German claims on Rwanda, and the claims of the Congo Free State remained in dispute until 1910. Early European explorers in the inter-lacustrine region (i.e., Stanley and Speke) had been told of a mountain, Mufimbiro, in the area south of Lake Edward, which was selected as a crucial juncture between colonial claims in an Anglo-German agreement in 1890. Subsequently, it was discovered by occupying forces that no single mountain known by the name of Mufimbiro existed; rather, a chain of eight volcanic peaks exist, known today as the Virunga Mountains (Virunga meaning volcanoes in Kinyarwanda). The British pursued their claims on the region, encompassing the entire range of mountains and a 5-mile-wide “neutral” corridor through the region, for the construction of a “Cape to Cairo” railway and telegraph service. Germany insisted on a “natural” boundary, meaning Ruzizi River and Lake Kivu; King Leopold of Belgium, who exerted considerable control over the Congo Free State before it became a Belgian colony, insisted on a meridian line (30 degrees longitude) that was noted in the Declaration of Neutrality that first defined the Congo Free State in 1885 (Louis 1963). While the debate ensued as to just where the border belonged, colonial contingents were stationed at various sites through this borderland to secure claims. Thus, Rutshuru was established in 1902 to check British advances (and by 1909 there was a 750-member military force stationed there), while Goma was established in 1906 to stop German intrusions (Sindaye 1975:122).

Pacification of the Beni-Lubero Territories

The colonial efforts to penetrate the Mitumba Mountains and to pacify the Nande people began with military excursions into the area in 1912 and the establishment of a post at Luhofu (present-day Lubero) in 1913.⁷ These efforts were interrupted

by the onset of World War I and subsequent skirmishes around Lake Kivu between German and Belgian-led forces. In 1922, occupation of the Mitumba Mountain region continued with the colonial military forces meeting some resistance, mostly in the form of ambushes, as they moved in from Beni in the North, and from Luhofu in the South. By 1924, a route had been secured through the region, and the administrative post at Lubero was established. It was one of the last areas in the Congo to be pacified. Efforts were begun to consolidate indirect colonial rule through the establishment of a number of grand chiefs in the region. Some chiefs then began to concede to the Belgians in the hope of gaining an upper hand over their rivals, while others, distrusting the Europeans, sent substitutes to claim colonial offices. Among the Bamate, the Batangi, and the Baswaga clans, it was only when these substitutes began enjoying salaries and gifts, along with increased executive privileges, that chiefs with ritual legitimacy claims came forward to accept the position of grand chief (Nelson 1992). The very politically fragmented Nande region was consolidated under the Ngulo chiefdom, with the office of grand chief of the Baswaga being awarded to the Ngulo chief (Bergmans 1970:63). Further north, the office of grand chief of the Bashu remained a matter of considerable dispute throughout much of the colonial period. Packard (1981:169) describes this dispute as a “struggle between the advocates of conflicting ideologies” and a “failure of early Belgian administrators to perceive the ritual character of Bashu chiefship.” The colonialists attempted to fashion the office of grand chief into a local administrator who would assist them in implementing social and economic policies, oversee the collection of taxes, procure agricultural produce, and help to recruit labour. All these roles, with the possible exception of the tax collection, were largely alien to the Bashu conception of a chief’s role (Pickard 1981:169).

These political changes were only a part of the larger social transformation that occurred in the region with the advent of colonial domination. Early on, the Kivu region was noted by Europeans as being ideal for settlers wanting to begin tea and coffee plantations, and with the discovery of gold in North Kivu there was a concerted effort to create a proletarian class to meet new labour demands. Alongside this need for a large working class was a need to increase agricultural surplus to feed the new working class population as well as the military and other state personnel. Major social transformations were imposed on the population of the region in an effort to introduce a capitalist-dominated social formation into the region. So began the first round of primitive accumulation.

The threat of whippings, imprisonment, and chain-gang labour, rather than any economic incentives, was what mobilised much of the needed labour during the early stages when construction of roads through the region was occurring and conformity to agricultural quotas was being forced on the population. Large groups of labourers were conscripted from villages in the vicinity of the

construction projects and forced to work for 2-month periods on the roads. Although a skilled core of craftsmen was given economic incentives to remain with the road-building teams, most of the labourers were paid very meagrely. A final stretch of road through the region, from Lubero to Beni, was built between 1925 and 1928, and the 90-km road going west from Butembo to the rich gold fields in the Manguredjipa area was built between 1928 and 1932 (Musekwa 1975:9). This road would indeed facilitate Nande economic activity, which would reach its highest level in the seventies when the price of coffee in the international market skyrocketed. According to Mirembe (2006), the parallel and informal economic activity which developed during the 1970s and 1980s can be traced back accurately to this period. These activities were described as “network economy” by de Villers (2002) because of the profound embeddedness of economic actors in their social environment; the success of these types of economic enterprises depended very much on the “density and the quality of networks of interpersonal relationships to which one subscribes” (de Villers 2002:25).

Economic activity occurring in the informal sphere must be taken as a particular expression of the social dynamic of the societies that develop them. Economic actors mobilise and use resources for economic development in proportion to their insertion into social networks, including not only the family and kin, but also friends, neighbours and other members of the community. This network solidarity, which provided participants with a kind of social insurance to accumulate wealth outside the official framework, was based in Butembo, the capital city of the Nande, created during the colonial period.

Butembo was established in 1928 and became the centre for the administration of the *Miniere des Grands Lacs* (MGL), which owned the mineral concession in the North Kivu area and dominated early development of the region. Mines were eventually opened up in a number of locales: Manguredjipa (the most lucrative mining area), Etaitu, Tuteri, Lutungulu, Muhanga, and Bela (Musekwa 1975:10). By 1945, one-third of the male population in some areas were employed in the mines or in some other wage-earning occupation (Packard 1981:184).

Other drastic changes were instituted in the effort to mobilise labour and to increase agricultural production in the region. An extensive village consolidation programme was begun in 1932, forcing the population out of small hamlets and into large villages where it was required that huts be built in symmetrical rows. Mud and wattle hut construction was mandated to replace the round, banana leaf-covered structures that people previously inhabited. Further, the construction of separate cooking huts, latrines, and quarters for livestock was enforced by colonial authorities. These new arrangements radically changed interpersonal relations, resulting in increased fear of sorcery accusations and feuding, against which punishments were levied. State-backed supervisors, *capitas*, were put in charge of villages to enforce local compliance with colonial requirements.

Besides the corvée requirements for road construction projects, extensive agricultural quotas were introduced, increasing demands on the peasants. New crops were introduced and assignments were given to individuals regarding plot size and the types of crops they were to produce. Failure to comply could result in whippings and/or imprisonment. Markets were set up and money was exchanged for produce. Greek merchants began offering much sought after manufactured goods (e.g., cotton cloth, pots and pans) that added an incentive to people's efforts. But a taxation system was also introduced as the primary mechanism for enforcing surplus agricultural production. As taxes could only be paid in colonial currency (with small tin medallions stamped with a different symbol each year, given as a receipt to those who paid), people had to sell their crops to earn the necessary money to pay taxes because wages weren't enough. After compliance was achieved, the rate of taxation was increased; being caught without a current tax medallion in one's possession was grounds for imprisonment.

Consequences of the Colonial Transformations

The total impact of these innovations was dramatic. Social control over the population increased with the colonial system and new anxieties were provoked by the threats of corporal punishment. Life became more and more difficult during the first decades of colonial development, and Packard (1981:176) concluded in his study of the area around Isale that, "The material standard of living among Bashu appears to have suffered a substantial decline during the first decades of colonial rule" and people had become much more susceptible to famine. He cites some obvious reasons for this. Forced evacuation of the rich Semliki Valley below 1,000 metres (later 1,500 metres), ostensibly to combat sleeping sickness, but also to create a game park, resulted in the loss of an area of rich agricultural production, village consolidation left gardens more vulnerable to wild animals, loss of a significant part of the labour population, who were recruited to work in the mines, left fewer hands devoted to agricultural production, and the need to raise money for taxes forced people to sell their reserves. In addition, a locust plague in 1935 and a serious drought in 1942-1944 had a severe impact on the region (Ibid 175, 185). Only after World War II, when the export of agricultural produce to urban markets in Stanleyville, Goma, and Bukavu began and the production of Arabica coffee by peasant farmers was initiated, did the standard of living in the region begin to rise. It was during this later period as well that the colonial regime, in an effort to maintain legitimacy, made significant strides in increasing social welfare benefits for the population (Merriam 1961). But little was done to empower African entrepreneurs either politically or economically (Vwakyanakazi 1982).

Women, in particular, quite literally bore on their backs much of the increased demands for agricultural labour resulting from the social transformation that took place when the class of (mostly male) workers was created to work for European concerns. A wage earner's pay was not sufficient to live on, forcing the wives of workers and their daughters to contribute to the subsistence of the family by continuing to maintain gardens. Wives of peasant farmers were forced to assume more farming responsibilities with the new quota system. Packard (1981:185) has attributed the rise of widespread belief in female witches, *bambakali*, to the social tension created by increased demands on women's labour and women's efforts to assert themselves by sharing in the benefits of that labour. As Packard argues, "accusations against women who were said to be *bambakali* seem to have served to reassert the dominance of men in Bashu society by providing a justification for punishing women who were seen as too demanding" (Packard 1981:185). The position of women in today's Nande society has not changed very much even though the general representation of woman in schools and business has increased at the national level.

The introduction of taxation also had an important impact on the division of labour in the family. Taxes were paid in two ways: with labour (each peasant was required to work one day a week for free) or with money (coming from cash crops or wage labour). Cash crops were not food, but rather raw materials, such as palm oil, grant nuts, coffee, oil and cotton. Moreover, only men were taxed (i.e., the taxes were paid by men). This changed the division of labour in the family; men grew export crops and women grew food crop. Men were responsible for providing money. Men migrated for six months to work on mines and plantations (seasonal work). They went for half a year and came back home for the other half. The salary was paid to one person to survive for six months. The woman grew the food for the whole family. Two processes then emerged: making the males proletarian and the females peasantry. For fear of losing their hold on the land, male workers developed an interest in the notion of customary law, which was very patriarchal, in order to ensure that land remains theirs. The male would remain attached to enforcing the law.

Moreover, in places where taxes were paid by growing cash crops, more and more household labour went into growing cash crops, and less and less for food crops. The main consequence of these practices was a recurrent famine once export crops were reproduced. Thus, the household diet changed and became protein deficient. Famine crop was introduced by law, the most popular being cassava. Even the drink changed from soft to hard alcohol with double distillation, the *arki*. The result of recurrent famine is malnutrition. One of the features of this colonial economy is that the technical base of peasant production did not change over time. As Rodney stated, African peasants went into colonialism with

a hoe and came out with a hoe (Rodney 1973). What then happened with the surplus that was being produced? In the case of the Congo, the surplus from mineral extraction and tax and agricultural revenues were expatriated to the colonial metropolis. The same colonial power then disparaged the consequences of its own acts by treating the Congo as backward, savage and underdeveloped.

In short, the changes coerced on African societies by colonial powers were extensive and severe. The introduction of a new form of economy that needed a large working class to exploit mineral and agricultural potential from the region requires far-reaching changes in social relations and political control. The extensive work of making the people proletarian, particularly in the Nande, many of whom were employed in mining operations, and the more systematic application of colonial requirements in the Beni-Lubero zones, together with the potential consolidation of large political units under grand chiefs, gave rise to new forms of ethnic consciousness as well. As this study will show, the Nande, as an ethnic group, is indeed a social emanation of all these overall transformations. Through these transformations and over time, the Nande acquired a consciousness of belonging to a distinct socio-political group. Nande-ness is the sentiment of being shaped by these historical transformations.

The boundary disputes, which occurred mostly in Europe (the Berlin scramble for Africa in 1885, for example, and the settlement between British and Belgians on the eastern border in 1902), demonstrate the arbitrariness of the formation of the Congo's national borders, which have exacerbated the so-called ethnic problems. In addition, into this transformative social context came other agents of change influenced by the same imperialistic ideologies that motivated the colonial masters. Belgian colonialists were accompanied by missionaries as ideologists for the new social formation that was being instituted. The ground proved to be fertile for the planting of new religious consciousness.

Baptist Work Ethic

The work ethic taught by missionaries in the beginning of the century is still remembered in the Nande region as one of their greatest contributions. The specific origins of trade networks, according to some Nande, are to be found in the Protestant work ethic introduced by the American Baptist pastors. In 1928, a protestant mission was established by the conservative Baptist Paul Hurlburt, who arrived in Butembo in 1928, just after the "pacification" of the region by the Belgians. The Baptist mission was located in Katwa, approximately 12 kilometres from Butembo. The missionaries introduced a capitalist work ethic by offering free education and religious interpretation of the Bible (translated into the Kinande language). But the Baptists are mostly remembered for teaching

a strong sense of self-reliance, planning and entrepreneurship. Joining the community means binding one to the productive efforts of the collective. Members of the community, including currently successful traders, note a number of significant aspects of their work ethic. As one trader recalls; “three things were taught to the *Baborobe* (the people of Hurlburt, the Nande shaped by the missionary doctrines): first, a dedication to hard, honest work, even in the absence of the boss; second, the demand not to waste one’s earnings on alcohol and prostitutes; third, the importance of delaying gratification for a greater compensation in Heaven”.⁸

Max Weber always resisted a direct causal interpretation between the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism (Mirembé 2005). It is, however, the general perception that the Nande’s commercial development has some link with the Protestant work ethic, even though it is dubious to speak of a purely capitalist economic enterprise in the case of the Nande. Indeed, the Nande continue to combine both capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production and exchange in their commercial enterprise. Furthermore, the double role of family and kin is very interesting. On the one hand, there is a strong and extensive inclusion of family and kin into business enterprises and, on the other hand, the continuous demands of kinship and family to share in the profits. Indeed, the distinction between market and non-market, capitalist and non-capitalist economic and social practices cannot be simply considered a thin threshold – crossed by the acceptance of a protestant work ethic – but, it is in fact a broad area rife with tension and conflict. It is indeed a *frontier region*, which covers the entire territory of what is called capitalism. As Mitchell (2004) writes,

The frontier has been a battleground. It is not a thin line marking the barrier between market and non-market, or formal and informal. It is a terrain of warfare spread across the entire space of the market, the entire length of what is called the history of capitalism. If it is an outside, then it is an outside found everywhere, a scene of battle that seems to define every point at which the formal or the capitalist can be identified.

The history of this battle has nonetheless been an increasingly ambiguous one, which is characterised by high levels of complicity and overlap, especially after the independence from colonial powers.

Independence and Post-Independence

During the colonial period, a kind of monopoly (oligopoly) of trade was observed. Indigenous Congolese were not allowed to produce beyond the subsistence level. African traders, for example, were excluded from Butembo’s market. In the late 1950s this exclusion became explosive because of the expansion

of the city in 1952 due to the transfer of a large portion of land in the centre of Butembo between the *Comité National du Kivu* (CNK), which owned not only a 20 hectares domain in the centre of Butembo but also all the land east (Vwakyankazi 1982:143), and individual businessmen who challenged the position of MGL and their monopolistic position. There was a growing consciousness among the Nande traders and other local elites that their political and economic participation was undermined and frustrated by the colonial state structure. To face the growing challenges from indigenous people, the colony responded first by changing the administrative structure of Butembo. In 1958, it went from being an indigenous city to an extra-customary centre. The Belgians appointed a local “chief of the centre”. Despite this provision, massive riots erupted in 1959 in Butembo. For more than a day, the city was the scene of violent protest. These riots were not directed against the colonial occupants, but almost exclusively against their local collaborators. The reason for this revolt was the imposition of local taxes (Vwakyankazi 1982:152).⁹ Like other central African countries, the struggle for Butembo’s political independence turned into a kind of “fiscal disobedience” (Roitman 2005) from the emerging Nande trading class.

Then came the Independence with all its disillusionment. This emerging Nande commercial class would then face new reality, the independent Congo which will not only discriminate against it, but also outsource the region for the benefit of the political class from which the Nande were excluded (MacGaffey 1987). Indeed, the nature of the political regime that emerged from the colonial independence led to very complex relations between the state ruling class elite and the more “traditional” and parallel sovereignties that maintained various degrees of power and authorities at the local level. These relationships are determinant in the development of Nande transnational trade. To understand the emergence of Nande cross-border activities and their persistence from the colonial period onward, one has to understand the contemporary social climate first in the Congo and then in Zaire.

Post-Independence Zaire: Black Hole of Calamity, Chaos and Confusion

Whereas Braeckman (1992) refers to post-independence Zaire as a “dinosaur state”, Lemarchand settles for failed state; Breytenbach (1999) emphasises state disintegration, and McNutty (1999) prefers the expression state collapse. Trefon (2005) goes an extra step and depicts the Congo as “a forsaken black hole characterised by calamity, chaos and confusion”.

After Independence, Zaire was one of the more promising countries in Africa. It covers a total area of 2,345,410 square kilometres, Africa’s third largest country. It shares its land boundaries of 10,271 kilometres with eight states including

Angola (2511km), Burundi (233 km), Central African Republic (1 577 km), Congo (2 410 km), Rwanda (217 km), Sudan (628 km), Uganda (765 km), and Zambia (1930 km) (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] 1995). Zaire is not only as big as Western Europe, it is also extremely well endowed. Its mineral wealth could lead one to prophesy its prosperity, but these natural resources could also be a drawback, given that they attract foreign exploiters looking for cheap enrichment and go-betweens who are happy to benefit personally without seeing that wealth distributed beneficially to the rest of society. Commentators are always ecstatic about its natural resources. As BBC journalist, Michael Wring said:

There has never been a better example of the curse of natural resource than the Congo. The mineral belt that fans out from Katanga's dry Savannah into neighbouring Zambia contains copper and zinc in concentrations rival nations can only dream about and enough cobalt to corner the global market. Nearly 500 miles North-West lies another gift of nature: the dark red gravel banks that trace the winding course of the Kanshi River, second biggest source of industrial diamonds in the world. There are other gifts: diamonds at Tshikapa in the South-West and Kisangani in the North, what was for a time the world's main source of uranium at Shinkolobwe, and across from the border with Uganda comes the enticing glitter of gold. Cadmium and cassiterite, manganese and wolframite, beryl, columbo-tantalite and germanium: metals with mysterious, evocative names. No wonder a US ambassador once memorably referred to 'the Congo caviar' in a cable knock to headquarters (Wrong 2000:108).

Zaire's post-independence economic management can be divided into two periods. From 1968 to 1974, the Zairian economy grew at an annual level of 7.5 per cent. From 1974, the year of Zairianisation, to 1993 the economy regressed at an annual rate of 1.8 per cent (Kankwenda Mabaya, 1993:244). In 1973, Mobutu decreed that foreign-owned farms, plantations, commercial enterprises should be turned over "to sons of the country" and the mining companies should be nationalised as state-owned companies. A graph of any indicator of Congolese economy shows a sharp peak in 1974 followed by a long, slow, unstoppable downward swoop that continues to this day (Wrong 2000:94).

In theory, the partial or total public ownership of shares in mining corporations could benefit the country. However, certain pre-conditions – for example, the control over the mining process itself and the marketing – would have to be met, and they all have to do with control of the accumulation process. In practice, the result of this radicalisation was an "obscene scramble for freebies by Mobutu's clients... Thousands of businesses, totalling around US\$1 billion in value, were divided and given to top officials in the most comprehensive nationalisation seen in Africa" (Wrong 2000:92). This predatory behaviour would characterise the

32-year reign of Mobutu. His regime survived by sucking the lifeblood from the citizens to such an extent that Zairians grew accustomed to the notion of the state as a ravaging predator. The word “politician” received a pejorative meaning equivalent to “he who had usurped all the material benefit of independence” (Young 1965:576). The post-colonial regime relied on the army and state bureaucracy to counter the ambitions and exigencies of the emerging political class and opposition. To the question of why such an ugly regime survived more than three decades given the decline of resources, Reno has this answer:

Mobutu’s remarkable success at co-opting and balancing different political factions, once financed with reliable outside sources of income, encouraged him to persist in past practices even when resources suddenly declined. Mobutu’s monopoly over the distribution of resources to a single patronage network discouraged him from innovating even as the pace of change quickly quickened in the late 1980s (Reno 1995:147).

Zaire had many commercial and diplomatic opportunities that could be translated into political resources. In 1986, copper, cobalt, zinc and diamond exports of state-run firms generated US\$1.15 billion in the formal economy. Coffee, the country’s main agricultural export, added an additional US\$80 million (IMF 1990). Profits from money laundering, illicit exports, and the drug trade were translated into patronage when Mobutu exercised direct control over the clandestine trade of those goods. Mobutu’s reliable outside resources of income were those constituted by foreign aid fostered during the Cold War. Foreign aid from superpower patrons in exchange for his anti-Communist stance netted him US\$448 million in 1986 (World Bank 1992). Total non-tax resources at Mobutu’s disposal stood at almost US\$1.7 billion in 1986. Added to that amount was American diplomatic support for loans from multilateral creditors in return for aiding UNITA rebels in Angola and permission to use a Zairian air base at Kamina to supply UNITA (Braeckman 1992). Mobutu manipulated relations with creditors, altering promises with brinkmanship to keep loans coming.

The IMF returned to Zaire in 1983 after a 5-year absence and disbursed US\$1.3 billion to Mobutu’s government over the next five years. A senior IMF official in Washington resigned in protest of what he claimed was too much leniency as the US put pressure on the IMF to grant Zaire a 6-year grace period on bilateral debt payments. As Wrong explains:

There is something rather touching about the figure of the late Erwin Blumenthal, the German banker who briefly tried to put Zaire’s finances in order and found the experience so terrifying, the rules of the game so far beyond anything he had hitherto encountered, he ended up sleeping with a pistol under a pillow braced for imminent assassination (Wrong 2000:189).

During the Cold War, creditor patience with Mobutu seemed almost limitless. From 1976 to 1990, IMF officials devised 14 stabilisation programmes for Zaire. Between 1975 and 1985, Zaire benefited from a rescheduling of US\$3.5 billion of Zaire's 1985 US\$7.5 billion external debt. Mobutu also boasted personal ties to World Bank officials. He actually hired as his personal assistant a World Bank official who had access to confidential information about granting aid to Zaire (Reno 1995:150). Mobutu's venality was so obvious that the continuous inflow of foreign aid became nothing but absurd. As Wrong put it:

How else to explain the level of aid the country continued to enjoy? Between the start of the Zairian economic crisis in 1975 and Mobutu's departure in 1997, Zaire received a total of US\$9.3 billion in foreign aid. Between 1975 and 1984 the sums averaged US\$331 million a year, rising to annual US\$542 million from 1985 to 1994 (Wrong 2000:189).

These resources underwrote Mobutu's patron-client network, giving him control over the distribution of resources to loyal associates. He created a highly personalised and centralised government, granted power, privileges, and material goods in return for the support, loyalty, and obedience of officials and administrators. This pattern was replicated throughout all levels of government by means of a patronage system (MacGaffey 1994). Mobutu exercised private control over many of Zaire's resources with foreign help while he abandoned expensive health care facilities, schools, and public works, all of which served citizens but contributed little to his stock of political resources. In 1990, 2.1 per cent of GDP was allocated to health and education in comparison with 17.5 per cent in 1972. Rural areas that no longer provided much state revenue could be abandoned as an '*Afrique inutile*'.¹⁰ Dramatic decline of formal-sector agricultural production for export followed Mobutu's disinterest in cultivating support among small agricultural producers and entrepreneurs in exchange for revenue and legitimacy (Reno 1995:152). Meanwhile, Zaire's state resources had become thoroughly concentrated in Mobutu's hands. In 1992, 95 per cent (64.5 per cent according to the World Bank) of Zaire's budget was reserved for Mobutu's discretionary spending (Reno 1995:152) (see Table 1). His personal fortune was estimated at US\$5 billion in 1992 (Braeckman 1992 :193; Askin and Collins 1993; Reno 2000:46) .

Table 1: Distribution of State Expenditure 1972-1992 (%)

Year	President's Expenditure	Agriculture	Social Services
1972	28.0	29.3	17.5
1974	26.0	32.1	12.4
1976	29.0	30.9	13.2
1978	29.0	41.0	11.0
1980	33.0	42.0	11.0
1982	35.0	32.0	10.0
1984	39.0	30.0	9.0
1986	39.0	29.0	7.0
1988	49.0	18.0	4.0
1990	80.0	11.0	2.0
1992	95.0	11.0	0.0

Sources: Banque du Zaïre, Annual Report, various issues.

In 1992, Mobutu allocated no state expenditure whatsoever to social services or physical infrastructure. He relied on his extensive personal networks rather than effective institutions for regime survival. Siphoning of the state resources for personal benefits was the main characteristic of the Mobutu regime. This wealth was not used to finance the infrastructure which produced it, and to develop local economy. Rather, it was spent on conspicuous consumption (luxuriant lifestyles at home and also in multiple European mansions) or deposits in foreign banks. According to Wrong (2000:191), special Zairian Central Bank accounts existed in Brussels, Frankfurt, Geneva and London under the president's name and were never featured in official records. The Mobutu regime created "parasitic capitalists" instead of entrepreneurial local capitalists.¹¹ As Verhaegen points out with regard to the Mobutu regime:

Instead of accumulating and transforming profits into a greater production capacity, producing more goods and generating more profits, it wastes and distributes with the desire, sometimes caricatured, to do the opposite of the coloniser. Where the coloniser saved, it redistributes; efforts at investment have been supplanted by spending for ostentation, costly trumpery, or clientelist support (Verhaegen 1995:45).

Zaire's political system resembled the neo-patrimonial dictatorships like in many part of Africa. Power was highly personalised to the extent that the definition of authority was based on patronage rather than ideology or political participation (Bratton and de Walle 1994). Peter Evans labelled Zaire a textbook case of a predatory state. It preyed on its citizenry, terrorising them, despoiling their common patrimony, and providing little in the way of services in return (Evans 1995:45). As a patrimonial government, the Mobutu regime exercised power through possession rather than position. Consequently, a dialectic of oppression (Schatzberg, 1988) ensued as people on the top of the political hierarchy felt obliged to accumulate resources as quickly as possible from those who occupied contextually inferior positions. The army was an ally to this regime of extortion, so the Zairians saw the army as essentially a foreign occupation force, rather than a protector of national security. Like its colonial predecessor, the Zairian army was authoritarian and had an impressive record of human rights violations. Like in the colonial regime, Mobutu introduced a system of "unfree labour"¹² by which he kept them under control. Mobutu's system of "*salongo*"¹³ – consisting of the obligation for every Zairian to perform one afternoon a week of compulsory labour on road maintenance and city streets cleaning of – was modelled on the colonial rule.

According to Mamdani (1996), African neo-patrimonialism was a form of politics that restored the bourgeois domination introduced by colonialism: it reinforced the relationship between the state and bourgeois power, which was organised in a top-down and bifurcated fashion. Both the colonial and post-colonial economies have the tendency to accumulate wealth at the expense of the peasantry. As Vwakyanakazi (1982:183) explains: "while contributing to the enrichment of a small and 'assimilated' elite, the mass of peasant and small traders were completely impoverished by this form of exploitation." Already, during the independence struggle, a small group of adventurous businessmen originally from Israel and Asia, but increasingly also of Congolese origin who were largely independent from bourgeois state centralisation, benefited from the implosion of colonial regulation to smuggle huge amounts of cash crops and minerals across the Congolese borders. A small class of intermediary traders continued to profit from the systematic town-country divisions and porous state borders to smuggle goods across Congo borders. Indeed, huge amounts of papaya latex, coffee, and precious minerals were smuggled in massive amounts over Congo's eastern frontier. The Congolese army was involved in this lucrative business by offering private protection to these intermediary traders. However, the real victims of this trans-border trade remained Congo's peasants who largely depended on autonomous social and economic links to sell their undervalued produce and buy necessary goods such as soap and salt. The relationship between

unfree agricultural labour and practically free-for-all and uncontrolled trading practices lay at the centre of Congo's underdevelopment.

Two main consequences of this patrimonial rule were the gradual informalisation and criminalisation of economic exchange. As the absolute power of the state grew, the only way to escape from radical impoverishment seemed to be to engage massively in unofficial economic activity. From mid-1970s onwards, Zairians increasingly turned away from official state involvement. In Kisangani, the *Toleka* (taxi-bikes) were a response to the deterioration of public transport service (Kabamba 2004). In Kinshasa, the capital city of Zaire, the now famous Article 15 was in full application. Article 15 of the Zairian Constitution was interpreted first by Mobutu as “*debrouillez-vous*”, meaning – fend for yourself. This doctrine emerged as a response to the rapid deterioration of the formal economy and was interpreted by people in Kinshasa as an alternative social contract which reflected the inability of the state to define the framework for political and economic competition (Jordan 2004). As MacGaffey (1991) nicely put it, “contrary to Hobbes’ *Leviathan* which offers protection in return for submission, Article 15 involved an implicit agreement between the Mobutist state and its citizens that allowed the former to retire from public life, while leaving to the latter the possibility to act unlawfully – or more precisely, to engage in acts that are more or less illegal, inadmissible. Within this new ‘social contract’ Nande seized an opportunity to buy themselves out by consolidating their emerging brokerage networks of transnational traders.

The Nande “opting out of state life”

The Zairian state's parasitic relationship to its people, one where resources, spaces and bodies have been seized without replenishment or detained in fixed models (Abdoulmalik 2008), has allowed the Nande actors to bail themselves out of the state's life; is a result of unpredictable intersections of legality and illegality, legibility and illegibility. As in the colonial times during which the rule was always partial and heterogeneous, always rearranged or distorted in implementation (Mamdani's indirect rule), Nande incessantly looked for openings to bend and distort Mobutu's imposed rule in order to make it work for their own self-conceived agendas. Here, indeed, the “bare life” imposed by the “dinosaur regime” of Mobutu on its people became constitutive of the moment of the sovereign exception (Agamben 2003).

The lesson the Nande teach us is that despite intermittent postcolonial periods largely characterised by obsessions with autochthony (Jackson 2004 Geschiere 2003), strong men and strong women, patrimonial rule and states of war, the road ahead has nevertheless been maintained as a largely open-ended process where social dynamism has been sustained. In other words, in the Congo, the

putative contract between the state and its citizenry, consisting of citizens fending for themselves, devolved completely into networks of local autonomies. In the DRC the transition from predation to economically productive taxation did not take place because of the weakness of state and market structures (Bayart 1998, 2000). In Mobutu's Zaire, wages were insignificant while social security was nonexistent; retreat into use-value production was impossible for city dwellers. The military was not paid. Consequently, they stopped functioning as an army and began to extract money from the population. The 1996 war was triggered by the combination of the crumbling congolese armed forces and the spill over of the Rwandan civil war into Zaire (Marysse 2004).

Notwithstanding (or because of) such bad political and economic environments, the Nande have taken over multiple functions previously assigned to the state. They fix and maintain roads leading in and out of Butembo. Each trader is personally responsible for 50 kilometres of road to repair. They organise tollgates where cars pay according to weight. Traders build bridges, pay militias, feed and house them. The Federation of Traders of Butembo (Federation des Entrepreneurs du Congo, FEC) has its court where disputes are settled. Many litigations concerning succession and land ownership are solved in the traders' court rather than the state court. Now, the traders have built the biggest mayor office in the country. They distribute food, clothes and medicine to refugees from the troubled region of Ituri and contribute substantially to the construction and the maintenance of schools, such as Université Catholique du Graben, the Catholic University, and Université des Grand Lacs, the Protestant University. Health Centres such as Hôpital Matanda and many other healthcare institutions (orphanage and nutrition centres) receive drugs imported by traders. Nande traders are, at the same time, the financiers of the wars around them. Minerals such as gold, coltan, wolfram, cassiterite, etc., which fuel and sustain the war in eastern DRC,¹⁴ are usually sold to Nande traders, sometimes in exchange for weapons.¹⁵ These mixed contributions of Nande traders to the development activities of their region as well as in the war ravaging the surrounding regions reveal the tension at the heart of the new forms of life emerging from the debris of the state.

Conclusion

This chapter reveals that current images of the DRC are not only the product of a particular interpretation of the concept of statehood (first chapter), but come also from the historical transformation of the Congo state itself.

This history has fed the modern images of the Congo. But, this is only half of the history. Despite the high overall level of violence of the state, new forms of life have emerged. The chapter has shown that the Nande ethnic particularity

congeals over time and through major historical transformations. The contact with the Arab traders on the caravan routes, the encounter with Belgium colonial power did not only change their family structures, but also introduced new crops and new forms of relating to these crops. The role of Baptist missionaries was also important in shaping Nande-ness itself. Today's Nande trading mentalities are tributaries of these encounters including the introduction of agricultural retail trade system, the transfer to Nande of Greek and Asian expatriate traders' mentalities, and finally the protestant missionary entrepreneurial spirit. Again, it is not some kind of essential and eternal cultural genius of the Nande that defies the perverted Conradian images of the Congo, but the social formation that the Nande have produced over time.

Notes

1. Roger Casement, "The Congo Report (1903)," Barbara Harlow & Mia Carter (eds.) 1998, *Imperialism and Orientalism: A Documentary Sourcebook*, Malden: Blackwell, pp. 320-322.
2. See Mark Twain's King Leopold Soliloquies and Adam Hochschild's King Leopold's Ghost. Hochschild talks about 10 million Congolese killed in Congo Free State. This figure is indeed to be taken with caution because of the context of imperialist international rivalry from which it came.
3. See also Walter Rodney's "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa".
4. It seems not very different from the situation in today's Iraq. See also Reno (2003) who suggests a comparison of the international anarchical society in which the unifying idea of an international society (the United Nations) is constantly being confronted with its fractioning parts.
5. The term *wonda* is more accurate designation, as opposed to *kama*, or ruling class, among whom the *bami* were the chiefs (Nelson 1992:27).
6. Researching among the Bashu clan of Nande people during the mid-1970s, Randall Packard challenged this view, finding that Konjo people have oral traditions that speak of their ancestors having migrated from the West. Packard, in turn, proposed that both groups may have been made up of people fleeing other areas, perhaps both North and South, who settled in the Semliki Valley region and later moved into the mountains on both sides of the valley. Recurring famine, and, possibly sleeping sickness may also have forced them out of the lowlands. They were not the first people to occupy the northern Mitumbas. However, the area had been sparsely populated previously by the so-called Busumba (bantu groups such as the Bapere, Bapakombe, Babira, Baamba, as well as Bambuti) (Packard 1981:56-58)
7. Until 1929, the Beni and Lubero territories were named, respectively, the Semliki and Luhoto territories, with an indefinite boundary between them. From 1923 to 1935, the territory of Semliki-Beni was administratively under the district of Ituri. It was transferred to Kivu after 1935.
8. Interview with Tsonga Kasereka, one of the oldest traders in Butembo.

9. In 1955, there were riots in Leopoldville, today's Kinshasa and in Butembo. The reason of this was the "*évolues*" (African Middle Class) claiming their rights to be treated with respect by the White colonialists. During mid-1950s thoughts of independence and rumours of struggle for liberation were mushrooming in most of Africa.
10. See Stefaan Marysse 2004.
11. McGaffey uses the term 'parasitic' to reflect the way in which those in the top level of society have used their virtually unlimited power to pillage the natural riches of their country and amass vast fortune. Despite Zaire's unfavourable context, a nascent true bourgeoisie of local capitalists, who do not hold political positions, have also emerged. These entrepreneurs invest in productive enterprise for local market, *amanager*, and expand their businesses in a rational capitalist fashion (The state and capitalism in Zaire 1994:193).
12. "Unfree labour" refers to all forms of work, especially in modern or early modern history, in which adults and children are employed against their will by the threat of destitution, detention, violence (including death), other extreme hardships to themselves or members of their families.
13. Regular organisation of collective labour for "the good of the nation"
14. UN Security Council Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo 2001.
15. Dan Fahey, "Le Fleuve d'or: The Production and Trade of Gold from Mungwalu, DRC" working paper 2008.

4

Theoretical Issues in the Nande Trading Networks

Introduction

Trading in Nande is carried out by a network of informal entrepreneurs who, in the absence of an overarching regulatory framework, have gradually taken over the role of political and economic power brokers. This chapter explores the origins, the reproduction, and the conditions of possibility for the emergence of a group of transnational traders in Butembo, which has gradually captured the social and economic surplus within the Nande society. This group includes a dozen import-export traders who are millionaires and at the top of the commercial hierarchy in Butembo and its hinterland. They import containers of goods ranging from textiles, motorbikes, automobiles, spare engines, medicine and other goods from East Africa, the Persian Gulf, Southeast Asia and China. They export agricultural products ranging from coffee to potatoes, beans, papaya latex and other vegetables, in addition to minerals such as gold, coltan, wolfram, and cassiterites. The group demonstrates a great level of internal cohesion and trust between its members.

This group qualifies for what Tilly calls a trust network consisting of social networks within which “people set valued, consequential, long-term resources and enterprise at risk to malfeasance, mistakes, or failures of others” (2005:12). Nande traders have to pay considerable attention to the maintenance of trust and social cohesion within the group and in the community in general. Thus, the study will focus not only on the origins, but also on the reproduction and consolidation of the Nande trust networks. A simple look at the Nande economic space suggests a mode of social and spatial organisation that is more concerned with economic incentives than with traditional social divisions. There is indeed an embeddedness of commercial enterprises in the Nande society and culture. Management of these commercial enterprises is usually confined to a close circle

of family and friends. However, the successes of the Nande trust network stem from the rigorous differentiation they maintain between business for the family's sake and business for growth and accumulation. Thus, while they remain historically embedded in their community, the Nande trust network operates as a real commercial "trust" (fixing prices, holding and/or sharing information on varieties of imports and markets). At this point, it seems important to examine why the analysis of the Nande traders in terms of network is appropriate, before exploring the origins of the Nande network

Is the Network an Appropriate Unit of Analysis for the Nande Case?

The word "network" is used in the social sciences to express the links between individuals and connections between actors (Bakis 1993). With reference to commerce, a network is a system of formal contracts or connections between traders to facilitate transactions (Monnoyer and Mayere 1995:140). Transactions are fundamental in merchant networks. Different social relations may determine the degree of connections to the network. A network may involve families, ethnic identities, racial affinity, religious brotherhood, caste membership, and professional associations, among other affiliations (Birmingham 1992:32). One could distinguish different types of networks in terms of their functions for commercial exchange: networks of communication, networks where members are connected and by implication, to some extent, mutually obligated because of family relations and kinship. According to Braudel, "merchant networks link together a certain number of individuals or agents belonging to the same factory or not, located at different nodes of the circuit, or network of circuits, trade lives from these nodes, these circumstances and links..." (1979:125). Commercial exchange networks assume a number of functions such as the provision of accommodations to itinerant merchants, storage of merchandise, brokerage, the transmission of information concerning prices, and control of those who convey merchandise and make transactions (Lambert and Egg 1994). Networks express and reinforce certain solidarity among merchants.

In transnational networks, there are various actors located in different countries with discreet rules for transactions: transportation agents, people in charge of storage, guides, informers, accommodations agents, commercial and financial intermediaries, transit agents, public servant, etc. Some may also play multiple roles, simultaneously. Networks may be occasional, opportunistic or permanent and durable (while nonetheless adapting to new contexts). Networks also may compete with each other. Competition does not necessarily imply a predisposition to destroy one another. All networks, even the most solid ones, have moments of fluctuation, and can even be replaced by new ones. However, an active network defeated by another has the tendency to re-adapt and innovate in other domains

(Braudel 1979:137). Thus, networks evolve, recompose according to *contexts*. Hausa transnational networks, for example, were created and dislocated depending on the evolution of economic conjunctures of economic opportunities and legislations adopted by various states (Cohen 1974).

Theoretically, networks can be analysed in many divergent ways. Social scientists analyse networks as nodes of a larger social system or, alternatively, as lines representing the interconnections of nodes. Nodes may represent individuals, but also groups of individuals like traders, households, collectivities, or states. The links may represent “flows of various types: information, resources, relations, etc” (Bakis 1993:100). A line segment may represent schematically a connection between a merchant and a broker or a salesman. The degree of connection and the roles may be interchangeable. That is why there are contracts, relays or sub-contracts. There could be strong links and weak ones between actors, and the possibilities of strong ties co-existing with weak ties (Graovetter 1973). While demonstrating the relevance of reticular concepts, insofar as the social organisation of traders is concerned, this study does not pretend to realise a cultural socio-metrics. Indeed, analysis of social networks has been accompanied by a rigorous sociological method of modelling, most commonly inductive of empirically documented relational structures (Lazega 1998:117).

In this study, networks will be considered as modes of relational connections, rather than as an agglomeration of casual practices among merchants. This is because the Nande network is built on trust, which goes beyond casual commercial practices. Trust should not be taken for granted because it is not a static attitude. Rather, it evolves over time and can go from being purely interest-based to more emotional and affective. Sanction is also as important as trust. Whether in the form of a community norm like in the Nande case or in the form of a contract or a regulatory authority, some kind of sanction still needs to exist in order for cooperation in networks to succeed. As Adam Smith observed, “Even in a society of thieves, some rules have to exist to keep the thieves from robbing one another” (Gambetta 1988). Moreover, in the so-called informal economic space, some rules need to be respected in order to induce efficient cooperation between the participants. Indeed, informal economy is anything but anomic, and, as de Villers (2002) said, informal economy involves “an amazing deployment of unwritten rules” that gives actors certain credibility in the face of their potential clients.

One sensitive issue, emerging from the Nande trading networks’ competition for the control of coercive power, is the need to protect their business. Indeed, protection is a very important commodity in the absence of an overarching regulatory framework, a context where trust is scarce and fragile (Gambetta 1993). The issues of protection for the traders and the stocks throughout the region and across borders will be dealt with later. For now, it suffices to say that

indeed, it is the interplay between trust and security, between legal and illegal, between legibility and illegibility, in the absence of effective state sovereignty and national government, and in the presence of numerous armed contenders for power. That makes the network a structuring analytical framework.

Furthermore, networks are increasingly evident in the social and economic history of capitalism. Braudel has shown the importance of Western merchant networks in the 15th and 17th centuries throughout the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean world coalesced around the circulation of persons. Around this space, merchants were organised into groups that created and controlled circuits and networks. Historians have also demonstrated that from the 15th to the 18th century, European merchants operated in Asia through local commercial networks established long before the Europeans' arrival and run by local entrepreneurs. These economic and social studies question the assumption that Western capitalism is a simple product of the individual rationality of European entrepreneurs. Indeed, according to Studnicki-Gizbert (2003), merchant relations relied enormously on personal social ties. Discussing the Portuguese in the 16th and 17th centuries, Studnicki-Gizbert stipulated that "kinship links, trading association, services and obligations, as well as a common origin and religious belonging are vectors of networks of dynamic relations" (2003:268).

If the existence of networks is increasingly acknowledged by Western historians, the analysis they offer relies upon fundamentally different modes of study and explanation from those offered to explain African networks. Studnicki-Gizbert (2003) identified two ways of analysing European networks historically: the first approach stipulated that commercial networks relate people sharing a common identity, based either on kinship, ethnicity or religion. The second approach is much more functional in the sense that social networks are highly dependent on their economic character. Merchants were foremost individual actors organising their social and family relations in an instrumental way for their own personal benefits. The latter conception is closer to the Weberian ideal of capitalist market relations. For Max Weber, "the market is in complete opposition with all other communications which always presuppose personal relations and most of the time family relations; market communication is radically alien to all sorts of family relations... free exchange occurs outside a community of neighbours and outside personal relations..." (1971:634).

This isolated type of entrepreneurship is not a prototype for African business societies. In Africa, networks articulate mercantile relations through and around social links. Traders in Africa maintain certain practices which steer them away from the Weberian ideal entrepreneur – rational and autonomous vis-à-vis socio-cultural determinants. African traders, one could say, are not strictly capitalists. Neither are they "indigenous capitalists" as MacGaffey (1987:25) would qualify

them. MacGaffey calls Nande traders “capitalist entrepreneurs” because they are engaged in capitalist accumulation, and are in search of profit. However, Nande economic behaviour is not reducible, in any strict sense, to capitalist rationality, pure and simple. On the contrary, while they certainly are seeking to maximise profit, these traders are also extremely keen to pay back to the community.¹ They contribute to building schools and providing cheap drugs to health centres. Mutual assistance and redistribution are part of African institutions. They operate in the relations of kinship, sponsorship, and the dynamics of association, etc. In cities, one can find ethnic associations which organise redistribution according to the origins of the recipients. As Salam Fall (1994) explains, “No matter what are their forms, social networks are frameworks within which goods and services circulate. Their interest is at the junction of different social domains, at the economic dynamics resulting from them, and at the possibilities of conversion of social capital into economic capital (and vice versa)”.² Kinship relations are involved in mobilising funds to start a business. In some instances, families will put together a certain amount of money and give to one member who has demonstrated a capacity for trade. For example, a group of Nande traders from Masereka decided to start a vegetable company which they called “*Légume sans Frontière*” (Vegetable without Borders) which supplied carrots, onions and cabbages from Masereka to Kinshasa. One member of the group said:

The family decided to open up a business. We bought a truck after a while and we were able to bring our vegetables to Goma, Bunia, Isiro and Kisangani. I spent an entire decade in Kisangani to control the business while my father was in Butembo to watch over the business there.

As far as employment is concerned, traders normally use family members as shopkeepers, drivers, or commissioners, etc. Traders in transnational commerce are indeed very discreet in their business practices. Access to commercial information and finance is given only to a trustworthy person. If the person does not inspire this kind of trust, then he or she must be sponsored by some other trustworthy person. Trust helps to avoid denunciation; it sustains confidence. Since transactions are made orally, “there is only “trust” to guarantee a successful result” (Ki-Zerbo 1985). As part of a network, an economic operator has access to information, goods, and other resources he or she would not have had otherwise. Relational resources are the paramount benefit of a network. Indeed, network logic is not the monopoly of informal traders. Even modern enterprises, for which contracts are formal, are more increasingly organised into networks, putting in place a kind of synergy within institutional relational structures.

However, socio-economic actors in the global South tend to evolve within non-institutional networks of relations. For Pecqueur (1989) these kinds of networks include personal and informal relations proper to local cultures, such

as relations of solidarity. The latter is primarily expressed through kinship networks. Family solidarity is indeed at the heart of the creation of many enterprises and their development. It makes it possible to raise capital outside a strictly merchant circuit. Ariel Colonomos (1995) argues that this sort of flexibility in the informal economy explains why networks are productive. The informal sphere is the privileged space for the construction of networks arising from the participants' consciousness of interests and values and their practical implementation of the perceived commodity of purpose. As we have seen, businessmen in Africa, as elsewhere, use socio-economic methods embedded in their socio-cultural practices. Important among the latter, especially in the domain of trade, is their integration into networks. These informal networks may be understood as based on social relations such as kinship, friendship, religion, intimacy and co-operation, etc. which are relations that tend to occur at the margins of the institutions of modern states.

For Badie (1995) the strength of social links is inversely proportional to the strength of modern institutions. The stronger the social links, the weaker the institutions. Thus, a network could be thought of as the sort of link that finds its strength precisely from its weak institutionalisation, from the precedence of associative logics over hierarchy and administration, or from the revenge of informality over formality. Badie argues that progress in the informal economy, especially in Africa, is manifested by the activation of trans-border economic flows that escape state control and substitute relations among fellow citizens with other solidarities, combining ethnic belonging with economic interests. Compared to the dominant approach, we are confronted with atypical forms of economic units. But, these atypical forms are characteristic of informal practices; they are heterogeneous, plural, and hybrid, rather than purely economic.

Transnational informality ought not to be understood in any simple sense as movements transgressing state frameworks because if this was the case, it could be too readily equated with or reduced to mere illegality. Instead, we are talking about flows of persons and goods moving through the spaces of multiple states, occurring despite institutional barriers created by the servants of these states, in ways that may, at times, be strictly illegal. But, as often as not, or ever more commonly, the flow may be extra-legal, operating outside of and beyond the purview of any given legal regime. The enmeshment of the economy in the social at the margin of state institutions is revealed by the atypical and informal practices produced through networks. These practices are based on institutions other than state ones. However, institutions may refer to social values and norms, rules of the game, or conventions which secure "social relations" between ostensibly economic players (Van Durme 1996). In societies or economies where formal institutions are often dysfunctional, as in parts of Africa, there are other

kinds of rules, conventions or *modus operandi*, habits, etc. to which economic agents refer in their multiple interactions and exchanges. In fact, as Van Durme put it, “relations of exchange in the informal sectors are determined more by informal conventions and social habits than by formal laws”. The ways one produces or exchanges in the informal economy shows that arrangements and interactions between protagonists are not based on an absence of institutions or conventions altogether, but on specific institutions and specific forms of organisations that do not pertain to the regulatory purview of states.

The most important factor in informal trade relations is trust. Commercial relations are usually established on the basis of interpersonal social relations. These relations make it possible for participants to keep their promises even though transactions are made orally, without recourse to any written contracts. Some traders in Butembo were able to borrow large amounts of money from one another without ever signing a single piece of paper as proof. One informant lent another trader US\$40,000 without asking for a signature as proof, nor a reimbursement with interest. When I asked him what happens if the money is not paid back, the answer was:

The victim will never sue, but everybody will know that that person did not pay his debt, and that will be the end of the person's business and consideration not only within the network, but in the entire community because of the reputation traders enjoy in the society.

A Nande trader by the name of Kafekit who was in Jakarta for medical reasons asked Kisoni, another trader, to sell 200 tonnes of tea from Kafekit's Butuwe tea factory and to put the money directly into his account in Hong Kong. Kisoni did what his colleague asked even though he complained to me that it took too much of his time. Enforced by social control, trust is the singular guarantee that money will be paid back or service will be delivered. Traders commonly transfer large amounts of money via trustworthy intermediaries. In short, trust is *the* organising value of Nande networks.

According to Tilly (2004), trust is a property of interpersonal relations in which people incur the risk of one another's failure or betrayal. The same people could simultaneously maintain relations with others, ranging from deep suspicion to confident trust. In the network of trust, members' relationships to each other put major long-term collective enterprises at risk of malfeasance or failure of other members. Trust networks organised around kinship, long-distance trade, or workers' mutual aid rarely face the threat of death or dispossession, but even such dire consequences are not entirely implausible, depending on socio-political contexts and circumstances. Trust networks constitute only a tiny subset of social networks. Tilly has identified four ways of recognising a trust network. First, a

number of people are connected, directly or indirectly, by similar ties; they form a network. Second, the sheer existence of such ties gives one member significant claims on the attention or aid of another; the network consists of strong ties. Third, members of the network are collectively carrying on major long-term enterprises such as procreation, long-distance trade, workers' mutual aid, or the practice of an underground religion. Finally, the configuration of ties within the network sets collective enterprises at risk of malfeasance, mistakes, and failures of individual members. Trust networks are one of the oldest ways of doing business, especially in the history of long distance trade.

History of the Networks

Nande traders are far from being an exception in networking. Throughout history, traders have travelled vast distances, and have sent commodities along trade networks. There is nothing new in this movement across cultures or in the exchange of cultural things around the world (Wolf 1982; Lovejoy 1986; Cohen 1974). The dynamics of networks are observable in all parts of Africa where long distance trade has been practised. Rey and Haubert (2000) studied the Omani and Zanzibari networks in East Africa and Indian Ocean. Omanis came to Africa for Islamic proselytism. They controlled trade in East Africa, creating real commercial networks with the indigenous Bantu speaking groups. From the 12th century in East Africa, the Swahili were involved in transoceanic trade, which became very important in the 19th century (Moulin 1982) when Muslim Arab traders from important families of the South Arabic peninsula were selling gold, ivory, and slaves on the international market (Constantin 1991). At one time, the island of Zanzibar acquired such an importance as an axis for these networks that Wesseling (1996) did not hesitate to call it the Afro-Asian new Singapore, where Africans, Asians and European were united by trading activities. In the case of Murid of Senegal, economic transactions are supported by social relations based on ethno-religious membership. Redistribution within Murid networks is organised through informal transfers of money to the country of origin (Ebin 1992, 1993, 1996; Diouf 2000; Riccio 2000). Francois Raillon studied Chinese migration to South-East Asia since the 17th century (Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand) where the majority of Chinese immigrants were small business owners, as well as artisans, peasants, factory employees, etc. Active and dynamic Chinese businessmen have managed to occupy important positions in the local economic life of Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia (Gernet 1999). In these countries, the Chinese diaspora, known as "*huiguan*," produced networks based on ethnicity. These networks developed around associations *huiguan* constituted on the basis of common dialect, clan, religion, education, and commercial professional affiliations. As Raillon explains,

Beyond some variation from one country to another, *huiguan* communities have one common feature, the recourse to *huiguan* associations which secure the chance of survival and even economic success [...] The primary task of these associations is to protect its members against a hostile milieu (2000:69).

These associations helped new immigrants settle in their new country. Many of these associations were created around temples for worship, and then they were transformed into *huiguan* based on profession or kinship relations. They are in charge of healthcare, education, conflict resolution, death and birth registration, taxes and other social welfare. Chinese associations also grant credit to entrepreneurs and reinforce ethnic solidarity. Chinese firms, which were for the most part family enterprises, survive in this space because of strong networks of commercial and industrial banks belonging to *huiguan* associations (Raillon 2000:172-173). These networks are informal, local, regional and international. During the second half of the 20th century, the *huaqiao*³ created real multinationals in South-East Asia, which Raillon called network capitalism.

Indeed, many trading networks exist and develop in other parts of the world with very similar characteristics, even though there are particularities related to their various contexts. These brief illustrations, though limited, show the historical importance of the involvement of socio-economic agents in relational structures. Thus, they are far from the liberal paradigm and Weberian perspective for which efficiency and rational decisions belong to individual agents, reified as a-historical individuals detached from family, kinship, or ethnic determinations (Gregoire and Labazee 1993). Analysis of trade in terms of networks allows us to consider traders historically and in the specific contexts of their particular interactions. In this study, then, networks are a fundamental instrument of analysis which allows us to understand the structure relating economic agents to long distance commercial links through their embeddedness in family and other social relations.

Operations of distribution, transport, funding, import or export are largely realised thanks to social links and reticular contacts. In the case of West Africa, for example, Labazee (1991) has observed that family, territorial, religious, political and financial relations have existed across nation-state borders for many generations, and constitute the heart of transactions within which information, credits, and merchandise circulate (Gregoire 1991; Igue 1995; Gregoire and Labazee 1993; Stary 1997). Traders in the networks operate within a space which could be extended to different national territories. Indeed, networks play the role of mediation between the local and the transnational. As Stary (1997) puts it, inter-state flows of merchandise produce an unforeseen regional organisation, especially in Central and West Africa. Networks give the impression of “integrations from below” beyond the one initiated by the states. This might only be a [false] impression. In fact, while the authority of network members over the cross-

border trade (or any other governance domain) might lead to a conclusion that they stand in opposition to the nation-state, this does not necessarily imply the nation-state's demise in terms of accumulation possibilities (Roitman 2001, 2007). The relations between these two (state actors and non-state actors) are usually very ambiguous: they are reciprocal and involved as well as competitive and antagonistic (Raeymaekers 2007). According to Roitman, the reason for this duplicity is that the state regulatory authority (in charge of tax collection, provision of local security) depends on the non-state forces for rent and means of redistribution. Roitman argues that smuggling networks can make important, if not essential contributions to the national political economy, even if this national economy is informalised or privatised.

Border regions which are far from the national market could find themselves marginalised by national politics of development. So the people living in the borderland must create a local dynamics based on proximity with their neighbours. Informal exchange networks then tend to develop. These border regions could become the axes of development connecting two or more state territories (Robert Alvarez). Border space may then be defined as a space of contact.

One can say that people living on borders initiate an informal regional integration, outside the state's institutional frameworks. They do not wait for state authorisation to get in touch with their neighbours on the other side of the border. Oftentimes, in Africa, these relations are ancient and part of the long history between populations. Therefore, a narrow economic perspective is inadequate to understand the capacity for regional integration within a space of transaction through networks. Even though space and geographical integration are usually analysed in a formal framework, it is possible to see that there are aspects which pertain primarily to the informal. In addition to the policies of integration variously encouraged by states and international organisations, people are in contact across (beyond) nation-state borders. Their economic networks in such contexts are, however, always already deeply embedded in wider social relations that are the foundation of their trans-border contacts and interactions.

Indeed, on the national level, states may claim to negotiate a more or less harmonious framework of exchanges at the level of the regional market. However, one must consider the market, as well as other factors such as cultural and historical affinities that might be at the heart of the composition and re-composition of exchange networks between national spaces. The main issue here is that the local can connect to the global outside state structures of integration. Information, telecommunication, means of transportation and other services, such as the transfer of funds, are all used by networks to connect the local to the global. Therefore, as far as exchanges are concerned, the local is thoroughly impacted by globalisation. Hence, one needs to avoid imprisoning the local in what could

be called “localism” because its dynamism is linked to its capacity to open up to national, regional and transnational scales of social integration.

There are multiple actors and logics at work in regional and global networks. The use of interpersonal relations does not exclude the rationality of economic profit-making. Moreover, there tends to be an articulation of formal and informal practices. This is why it is appropriate to emphasise informal practices rather than a monolithic thing called informal economy. By transnational economic network we understand a group of social, commercial, financial and administrative agents closely related to each other, relying, to varying extents, on interpersonal trust. Even though they evolve in multiple national spaces, these groups regularly use this relational structure to move resources – capital, information, merchandise, services, etc. – and usually function outside formal institutions. The social economy of networks is an important tool for understanding the structure of transnational processes. Networks are central to conceiving the relationship between local economy and transnational commerce. Networks’ nodes facilitate connections at the local, regional, national or international levels. Contrary to the theory of external exchange where state and state actors play the major role, networks engage another type of player – non-state players and non-state institutions. Nande traders are among these non-state agents bound by relations of trust and operating within non-state institutional networks.

Furthermore, the trust network is a relevant concept to the study of Nande trading business because it focuses on the structure of social relationships (Raeymaekers 2007) which precede trust and institutions. It also gives us the opportunity to understand the interactions between trust networks and other forms of social relations, such as the state. Tilly (2005) suggests that different categories of relations are possible between social networks and state structures, ranging from bargaining to outright competition. Some parallels could be found with the phenomenon of ethnicity, which is also an explanatory variable for the emergence of social and economic order in Africa in general and in the DRC in particular. Indeed, ethnicity can be elusive or even evasive (Schlee 2003; 2004), but the Nande ethnic group is an emanation of a specific history and ideology constructed through struggles and a search for equilibrium between inner and outer workings of power in different social networks. For Nande traders, the effort to generate and consolidate trust in order to keep the group’s cohesion, was always combined with the urgent need to protect their business, either by the use of militia or by the development of multinational ties. Of course, this balance holds the potential for the emergence of a kind of sovereign governance framework that could also be inscribed in the same logic and even epistemological order as the neo-patrimonial Congolese state. It has the potential to become a communitarian version of Mobutu’s patrimonial state.

Boundaries or Borders: Origins of Nande Trading Networks

While the historical origins of the Nande trading network is to be sought in the colonial retail trade, the ideological origins can be understood as the geographical and political conditions that made the emergence of Nande networks possible. The question here is the extent to which the existence of national borders was determinant to the emergence of the Nande trust network.

Migdal (2004) defines boundaries as different from borders. Unlike borders, he argues, boundaries evoke the point at which “something becomes something else”; the point at which the ways things are done change, certain rules of behaviour no longer pertain, and other rules take hold. Contrary to borders, which convey a territorial dimension, boundaries include important symbolic social dimensions. Boundaries can then be described as social constructions embodying social tensions and conflicts reflecting other spatial and social paradigms than those created by the colonial and post-colonial nation-state. To make sense of the Nande trading network’s spatial logic, one has to integrate the perspective of historical intra-community relations across boundaries or outside the immediate communal context. In fact, Nande spatial logic has constructed a sense of belonging and identity that runs parallel or in opposition to the dominant state spatial logics. Thus, for the Nande traders, the Ugandan border defines boundaries that symbolise a space of exchange and contact rather than territorial barriers that invoke the idea of separation or limitation.

Indeed, borders have traditionally played an important role in defining trade patterns in pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial regimes. Writing on West Africa, Igwe (1983) stated that “informal economic networks are manifestations of the old exchange networks set up by African communities, whose caravan trade was attacked and paralysed by the colonial empire.” Similarly, Mirembe traces the Nande informal economic development back to pre-colonial trade patterns in Central Africa – especially the inter-lacustrine caravans in the salt trade. The latter generated a number of important and prestigious social functions. As Vwakyazi (1982) puts it, “because of its numerous dangers, the salt trade gradually developed into an extremely prestigious enterprise that ensured traders access to social and political status as well as women.” Butembo would play a central role in this salt trade as an important stopover site for passing caravans (Mirembe 2005:15-116). It allowed people living on higher lands to acquire this rare good. The importance of salt in the African political economy, historically, has been amply demonstrated (Lovejoy 1986). The salt trade is a very important pre-figuration of today’s Nande trans-border trade. It is, therefore, useful to pause and consider its history and implication.

Pre-colonial and Colonial Boundaries and Border-crossing

As discussed in the second chapter, the *Yira* were part of the ancient kingdoms of Kitara in southwest Uganda between the 11th and 14th centuries. With the decline of the kingdoms, a group of *Yira* migrated west of the Semliki Valley. Successive migrations brought people further into the mountains and highlands, which are today the territory of Beni and Lubero. Their different migrations from the 17th century onwards were apparently motivated not only by the search for fertile land, escape from the slave trade, efforts to avoid mosquitoes, but also by the development of the salt trade, which was exploited from the Lake Katwe on the east bank of the Semliki Valley (Moeller 1936).

As an effect of colonial border agreements, a portion of the *Yira* people found themselves in Uganda and another portion in the Congo. Those who were on the Congolese side travelled to Katwe in Uganda via the Semliki Valley to search for salt, and maintain their kinship relations, despite the separation imposed by colonial borders (Mirembe 2005). According to Kambalume (2002) the traditional *Yira* society was able to produce a surplus from agricultural activities. This surplus allowed them to engage long-distance trade to barter for salt and other items they did not produce. Salt was highly demanded in the Kivu Mountains, because of its use in cooking and the preservation of meat and fish. Caravans of fifty to sixty Nande traders regularly crossed the dangerous Semliki plain to gather salt from their former Hima kings. These expeditions were not without dangers such as the crossing of large rivers and encounters with wild and dangerous animals. Members of expeditions had to know the roads and fix the dates of expeditions, in advance, according to the decreased water levels and appropriate time to get salt from salt pools. These trips organised by the whole village to Uganda were quite dangerous. At this time, most people were not accustomed to travel. Travellers, who wanted salt, went in small groups. Packages of salt were tied around wood to facilitate transport. This packaging also made it easy to redistribute along the road to friends and family members, who housed the travellers overnight, or to those who assisted in transportation. Expeditions of caravans to acquire salt were a unique long-distance economic activity of great importance. Butembo already played an important role in this trade; at the time, the village called Lusambo, which is now part of Butembo, was a stopover for caravans coming from Katwe on expeditions for salt (Kambalume 1972:20).

Upon return from an expedition, families would congregate. People were happy not only because the returnees had overcome the dangers related to travel, but also because a redistribution of the salt would follow. The redistribution reinforced family and lineage relations, for salt belonged to the family collectively; each member of the family received a portion of the salt. Because salt was not sold, but donated, it also helped to create and sustain friendships and to extend

the network of relations. Salt was also offered to elders. It was not an everyday item, but a rather rare and precious good. However, salt was also intended to generate income, because it was exchanged for goats. If one received salt as gift, one returned the gift with a goat in a manner analogous to potlatch communities where the ultimate goal of the gift given was to destroy surplus wealth. In the *Yira* culture, goats had a particularly important place as they still do in contemporary Nande culture. Goats were given as bride price and as a symbolic price paid to use somebody's land; goats were also paid to repair marital infidelity.⁴ Therefore, having salt meant the potential to accumulate goats, and thus also to access land, all of which were vital in an agricultural society. Salt could also be exchanged for a valued good, because it was symbolic of wealth. Salt was used in kitchens and for the preservation of fish and meat. It was also used as a detergent. It was a relatively durable good with much value in it; hence, it was a means of savings. It effectively played the role of money; a valued good with which one could acquire other goods, the use of which was simultaneously utilitarian and symbolic, functioning to some extent as a universal equivalent in all other exchanges.

Colonial Boundaries and the Role of Borders in the Emergence of Nande Trust Networks

The description of the salt trade shows that long-distance trade in the *Yira* territory went back as far as the 17th century, long before the colonial intrusion, which created an artificial border dividing them into two groups in 1908. The act of crossing territorial boundaries for commerce did not start when colonial powers imposed frontiers between Congo and Uganda. In fact, an Anglo-Belgian commission fixed the eastern border between the two countries. Predictably, this arbitrary border had no consideration of the ethnic homogeneity of the population involved on both sides of the divide. Local people were not allowed to cross the border. Yet, the pre-colonial local space extended to part of present-day Uganda. Expeditions in search of salt went through the south-west of modern Uganda. People and goods have always circulated across both sides of the arbitrary boundary instituted by the colonial authorities. Relationships between the Konjo (Nande of Uganda) and those of the Congo, moreover, did not come to an abrupt or absolute end as a result of the colonial frontiers. People continued to maintain family relations between the two sides and continued to move from one side to the other in the customary manner, ignoring the formal customs regulations (Mbogha 1975). Among the factors that encouraged the use of Uganda as a space for trade during the colonial period was the acknowledgement of different opportunities in terms of employment, revenue, currency, or the variety of items offered for trade there, in comparison to the Belgian Congo. This knowledge arose because of the intimate social relations across the borders. One trader described the situation in the following way:

During the colonial period some young people from my village went to Uganda to search for salt. Once they were settled there, they called others to join them for business. Thus, some six years before Independence, I was going to Uganda to sell my coffee. We were travelling on foot in a group of four or six carrying our 25kg of merchandise on our heads. We travelled during the night, on foot, through what is known today as the Virunga Valley. We avoided the Park guards. In our group, we always had a former “Park guard” who knew the road very well. In the morning, we arrived at Mbondwe, a town on the border of Uganda. We were welcomed by people from our own village. They gave us accommodation and facilitated our contacts with potential buyers, usually the Hindi (Indo-Pakistanis) in the neighbouring commercial centre of Bwera. Contacts with the Hindi were made through their Kapita (headman) who was usually a Kondjo (a *Yira*, from the same Nande ethnic group). The Hindi weighed our coffee and exchanged it for merchandise such as clothes, blankets, sewing machines, radios and others goods we needed....

Among the first people to dispute the colonial trade discrimination was a man by the name of Kibangu. He was a Muslim resident of Butembo. Kibangu started his business, fish and salt trade from Uganda, around 1920. In Katwe (a salt lake in today's Uganda), he became a member of a fish vendors' association that introduced him to the Sunni belief. After his conversion to Islam, he took the name of Yusuf. From Katwe, Yusuf brought with him Sunni Islam as well as commercial products such as salt, fish, pearls and bracelets to sell to local women (at a time “when people were still dressing in animal skins”),⁵ Kibangu was very active in denouncing the colonial abuses that were happening in the territory of Lubero. He was the first whistleblower on the killing of patients by colonial doctors in Musienene. He was arrested and imprisoned for his forbidden trading activities across the Ugandan border in the 1950s. Kibangu stayed in Bukavu's prison for three years. He was accused of stealing colonial property, and the colonial police confiscated his two cars. According to his family's narrative, Kibangu was released from prison by the intervention of a certain “Mr Loti”, a member of the Belgian royal family. He not only defended Kibangu, but he also obtained permission from the colonial officials to let Kibangu continue his trans-border trading activities and to settle in the city of Butembo. With Mr Loti's help, Kibangu opened his first trading house near the Butembo market.

Upon his release from prison, Kibangu initiated another Nande trader called Peruzi, who settled in Butembo around 1937 after coming from the Ruwenzori area. Peruzi focused his commercial activities on two highly demanded commodities: salt and banana wine. Peruzi reached an agreement with a Belgian citizen to continue the traffic of brown salt from Lake Katwe. “*Kagbutura*,” as it was called, was used only by indigenous Africans and not Europeans, so the latter closed their eyes to Peruzi activities. In today's Butembo market, there is a

corner called "*Kagbutura*" where brown salt was sold. Peruzi's business empire grew to become a symbol of success in Butembo. For Vwakyankazi (1982), Peruzi's success in business illustrated that Africans are able to do business successfully. The knowledge of local need structure was as vital then as it is today in order to succeed in trading activities. Many people were inspired by Peruzi's example of fighting the colonial restrictions that prohibited the locals from engaging in trans-border trade.

One of the policies enforced by the colonial power in many African countries, especially in the Congo, consisted in stopping all indigenous trading activities that could be seen as challenging the colonial monopoly. Thus, indigenous people could not get involved in mineral extraction, coffee plantations or other cultures designed for export. This was the case in the Nande region of Butembo where Greek merchants had a monopoly of trade with the support of Belgium colonial government. In addition, the indigenous people were prohibited from leaving their villages without authorisation from colonial authorities. Thus, it was very difficult for indigenous people to sustain long-distance trade because their freedom of movement was very limited. During the colonial period, trade was an exclusive activity for Greek and Cypriot citizens in places like Beni, Butembo and Lubero. They arrived in the region in the 1940s. Their business activities were usually installed wherever colonial administration and civil servants allowed because the latter had considerable purchasing power. The building of shops in villages allowed peasants to acquire manufactured goods close to home. Greeks in Butembo were getting merchandise from Orientale Province (from Kisangani, Isiro, Bunia) and from other Greek traders. They had a monopoly over trade in the region and managed to accumulate considerable capital. They bought vegetables from peasants and sold them to cities like Kisangani and Bunia where other Europeans lived. They were also in charge of manufactured goods. They had access to bank credit and obtained licences to export coffee. There were also other European enterprises such as SHUN (*Societe du Haut-Uele et du Nil*), which was in the transport business.

Nevertheless, during the colonial period, indigenous people continued trying to organise their economies while accommodating themselves to the new harsh reality of colonisation and its brutal restrictions. New products such as wheat, vegetables, potatoes, and beans were introduced. Roads connecting villages to commercial centres were mended; they were also opened to facilitate the circulation of merchandise and the transportation of workers from plantations and mining camps. The mining company M.G.L. (*Mines des Grands Lacs*) was created in 1923 and possessed mining camps in many places in the region with their headquarters for North Kivu based in Butembo. M.G.L. exploited gold, cassiterite, coltan, wolframite, beryl and other minerals. These mining camps

provided basic meals for their workers and, thus, were the main food buyers in the region, purchasing food from Greek traders and other cooperatives. M.G.L. repaired 500 kilometres of road leading to mining camps, hiring locals for this labour; some, especially women, were involved in the subsistence agriculture three-quarters of each year while men were working in the mines. Others were ambulant traders going from one village to another selling their merchandise. This ambulatory mode of trading was popular in the Congo during the 1940s.

A December 1925 decree in the Belgian Congo prohibited all Africans, ambulant traders, or others economic agents, from selling things in indigenous settlements without prior authorisation to travel for commercial purposes. Such authorisation was individual, nominal, and valid only for a specified territory. In order to get this authorisation to trade, an indigenous person had to pay for a licence and prove that he was able to measure, count, weigh, read, write, and keep an account book for his operations in a European or an indigenous language. Hence, many pioneers of the ambulant trading practices in the Lubero territory were the former shopkeepers of Greek traders who were using their commercial expertise in the service of the local market to provide goods where the Greeks could not reach. Others did the same thing – by-passing state regulations. In addition, itinerant trading was practised by Baptist pastors taking advantage of their evangelisation tours and their freedom of movement to inquire about the needs of local communities, which inevitably included commercial items. Indeed, during the subsequent decades, many commercial entrepreneurs and traders would come from these Baptist religious communities. Other pioneers of ambulant trading were artisans looking for markets for their products. Some of these people were also growing vegetables and had established commercial relationships with local Greek merchants. After selling their agricultural products, they bought manufactured goods to re-sell in their villages. These ambulant markets also profited from the establishment of markets organised one day a week in different villages. These were very small markets where business activities were embedded in social relations. Among the products sold in the villages were salt, soap, and other materials. Vegetables, fruits and eggs were transported on foot from the villages to the towns where Europeans lived. Those who accumulated some capital from this trade were among the first to open shops in the villages.

The Catholic Church was dominant in the Congo during the colonial period, but some Protestant missions were also very active in parts of the country. The region of Butembo, which was 80 per cent Catholic, had some American Baptist missions such as Katwa and Kisimbiri that depended on Ugandan Baptist Missions of Fort Portal. American Baptists, who were not at all involved in trade like the Greeks, were allowing some of their parishioners to sell goods, especially coffee, in Uganda during their month of biblical training in Fort Portal and Kampala.

Thus, these parishioners, who were not allowed to trade in Butembo because of the colonial law, had the opportunity to make profit under the cover of their church. They slowly became among the richest in their villages and established themselves in the city where they continued to smuggle coffee through Uganda using the cover offered by protestant biblical training. As a result, the first Nande traders were Protestants, not because of any Weberian affinity between Protestantism and the ethos of capitalism, but because of the practical cover provided by their church to by-pass the colonial law prohibiting trade for the indigenous population.

Thus, borders were transformed into boundaries where social contacts, including trading activities, were attracting more and more Nande people. It is, therefore, a fair assessment to say that the Ugandan border was vital for the emergence of the Nande trading network. In the pre-colonial period there were no borders and the search for salt was pursued along the caravan road up to modern Uganda. When the colonial powers set the border between Uganda and the Congo, trade continued despite colonial restrictions and discriminations. These restrictions provided even more organisational capacities for those people who became very successful through their knowledge of the market and from trafficking and smuggling products across the border. These activities led to a growing consciousness among the emerging Nande elite that their political and economic participation was directly crippled by the colonial state structure. It was not until Independence that the colonial trade monopoly was seriously challenged and eventually broken, which provided great opportunities for Nande traders to expand and network seriously.

Post-Independence Boundaries and Border-crossing as Origins of Nande Trading Networks

During the colonial period European expatriates also engaged in small scale trade, but it was increasingly passed on to locals while expatriates concentrated their business activities in the larger towns and important commercial centres. In villages, the local economy was based on agricultural products, animal husbandry, and small scale family businesses. In the 1950s, mini-shops were opening in the villages and manufactured products were increasingly sold. Merchandise was shipped on foot or by bicycle from centres like Butembo, Beni and Lubero to villages. Greek merchants possessed small warehouses where they stored merchandise. They also supplied merchandise to shops located along their itinerary. These shops were successful and had a tremendous impact because Greeks allowed the local peasants along their routes to borrow merchandise and pay after they had been sold. However, the exclusion of Nande traders from the Butembo market was becoming more and more untenable. The expansion of

Butembo in 1952, which resulted from the transfer of a large terrain in the centre of Butembo between the CNKI (Comite Nantionale du Kivu) and a number of individual businessmen, attracted a series of businessmen who challenged the position of MGL and their partners. When Nande elites started to express concerns about colonial economic and political restrictions, the colonial power responded (in 1958) by changing the administrative status of Butembo from an indigenous city to a “*Centre Extra Coutumier*” (extra customary centre) with a Nande “*Chef de Centre*”. Despite this provision, massive protest erupted in the town in 1959: “During the entire day Butembo became the scene of street riots which targeted not the colonial administrator authority, but their African collaborators, especially the tax collectors” (Vwakyanakazi 1982:52). The struggle for Butembo’s political and economic independence was similar to what was happening in other part of Central Africa; it was assimilated to fiscal disobedience on the parts of emerging Nande commercial elite (Roitman 2005). After Independence, the compulsory production system of cash crop and food embodied in the colonial state structure collapsed. MGL stations closed around 1961 and the oligopolistic retail trade was dramatically reduced. Despite certain violence from the colonial authorities, the economies of local people were not suppressed; their mode of production remained largely intact. Indeed, the encounter with Western colonial economy commanded a re-adjustment of certain local practices, some of these disappeared, and others were invented thanks to the creativity and adaptive capacities of the people. Due to the price of coffee, which skyrocketed between 1956 and 1964, and again in the 1970s, trade with Uganda increased. The price of coffee was very high in Uganda and the profits were therefore high enough to allow traders to acquire merchandise that they could not find in the Congo. From 1960 to 1963 papaya was exported to Uganda, as well as ivory, and later gold.

During the 1960s, because of post-independence insecurity, many Nande, including traders migrated to urban areas, mainly Butembo. The population of Butembo increased from 11,189 in 1958, 20,674 in 1965, and 22,236 in 1966. The growth of population increased the level of subsistence trade – small shops and boutiques mushroomed along Butembo’s streets. The Congo civil war from 1964 onwards provided great opportunities for Nande traders to prosper. With the war, the state authority was reduced to its minimum expression and the state borders were not controlled. The war prevented peasants from going to their fields causing an increase in the price of agricultural products. People left their villages and moved to towns for safety. This situation created increasing market opportunities for traders. The complete collapse of state control over borders encouraged cross-border mobility in the population of Kivu. The most courageous among them crossed the border into Uganda in search of new markets, following

the footsteps of their ancestors who were involved in the salt trade. The skills of Nande traders were to be found in their rapid adaptation to political and economic risk, even during the war. The situation created by the war gave the Nande an opportunity to exploit the Ugandan and Congolese borders. This contradiction will appear clearly in the emergence of a group of people called “middlemen” who channelled food and cash crops from producing countryside to urban centres in the Kivu. The origins of this trade are to be found in the central highlands of Lubero, especially the villages of Masereka and Lohoto.

Marginalisation Theory and Origins of Nande Trading Networks

Did the marginalisation of the Nande by the colonial and post-colonial regimes prompt the development of their trading networks? Students of the marginalisation theory suggest that relational resources, i.e., the potential to build extra-communal ties for the purpose of economic growth, is high in the following groups: a) those with distinct cultural characteristics that increases prejudice toward them and lowers the probability of entry and exit; b) those engaged in strong, frequent confrontation with other groups perceived to be more powerful; c) those suffering a high degree of discrimination and without alternative windows of social and economic opportunity; d) those possessing a high degree of internal communication and able to confer unique rewards upon members (Woolcock 1998; Portes 1995; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). These characteristics are usually mentioned together with lack of education and financial resources emerging from the marginal political and social status of these communities.

In African studies, these perspectives have been used by Akeredolu-Ale (1975), Garlick (1971), and Marris and Somerset (1971). Janet MacGaffey’s seminal work on the informal economy in Zaire suggests that the marginalisation of the Nande in Zairian administration provided an important factor of their informal economic development. At Independence, according to MacGaffey, the Nande region was neglected by the central government in the allocation of state resources for development. Indeed, the distance from the central government in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) had a marginalising effect. However, it also put the Nande beyond the control of the centre, and “this gave them a degree of autonomy which made it easier to organise their own affairs in response to government neglect” (MacGaffey 1987:146). The marginalisation of the Nande by the central government had a double effect of pushing them away from politics, and into “informal” economic practices (Ndaywel 1998; Leclercq 2000; Raeymaekers 2007). In the 1960s and the 1970s, important political positions in the Kivus were occupied mostly by the Banyarwanda Tutsi from Masisi and Suth Kivu, and the formal economy was largely in the hands Mobutu’s clients (MacGaffey 1987). This made the Nande’s involvement in “informal” economy an act of resistance. Vwakyanakazi talks about “a rebellion against the predatory and

dominant Zairian political system” (1982:340). The Nande trading network is an example of market integration outside the state system. It was their reaction against the predatory government machineries that actively denied them their political rights (MacGaffey 1987).

Anthropologists like Remotti (1993) think that resistance in the Nande case is inscribed within the historical processes which produced the *Yira* people. Rather than a cultural designation, Remotti in turn sees in the term *Yira*, a reflection of the *Yira*'s socio-economic status of opposition, first against the pastoralist ruling class of the *Hima*⁶ then as agriculturalist opposition to the land-owning aristocracy within the Nande customary society, and finally as the primitives in opposition to the civilised in the context of colonial society. On the other hand, Sarata (2002) argues, this status was traditionally associated with a certain tolerance from the customary authority to let people engage in private commercial enterprises. The acceptance of private initiative is at the origin of the spirit of constructive competition where individuals compared their success with others. In the surrounding communities, the customary chiefs had the tendency to strangle merchant initiatives. In the *Bashi* community (South Kivu), for example, and even in the *Hunde* (North Kivu), a vassal was not allowed to enrich himself more than the local *mwami* (Kasay 1988). In fact, the *Yira* were never organised under centralised government. Their community remained historically divided between Konjo and Nande.

The Nande community itself was divided in several clans and sub-groups usually known as chiefdoms: Banyisanza, Bashu, Baswagha, Batangi and Bamate. These chiefdoms enjoyed a tacit political autonomy and were united under different totems. This political dispersion resulted in the maintenance of a certain degree of autonomy once these clans were integrated into a single kingdom. For Bergmans (1970), the Nande political system contained in itself the seed of the fragmentation of power. For an external observer, the Nande political system contained important centrifugal tendencies directed more towards expansion and conquest than to territorial consolidation. This illustrates the accuracy of Latham's (2003) claim that sovereignty, rather than being an expression of a singular ruler or actor, finds its significance in the system of codes and rules that govern a particular social domain. In the Nande community, sovereignty is traditionally instituted in two figures: the *mwami* (chief) and the *mughula*, a kind of anti-power figure⁷ that intervenes in crucial phases of the *mwami*'s life (Raeymaekers 2007:39). This sovereignty is expressed in the vast network of tributes that makes it possible to individuate particular links between different clans and individuals (Remotti 1993:45). This “network of tribute” and relationships impacted the Nande economic organisation in special ways. The parallel and informal economic activities that developed in the 1970s and the

1980s were, in fact, a network economy where the success of the economic enterprises was intensely dependent on the “density and the quality of [the] network of interpersonal relationships to which one is subscribed” (de Villers 2002; Mirembé 2005). In this type of economy, actors are profoundly embedded in their social environment. The activities here are understood to express a social dynamism of the societies that develop them: economic agents mobilise and use resources for economic development through a plurality of social networks, of family and kin, friends and neighbours, and other members of the community.

Finally, the contemporary production of Nande networks can be linked to the Zairian political context. To understand the current predicament of the DRC and the place of the Nande, it is important to recall briefly the two types of evolution the country went through during the last four decades. The first evolution is the one Bayart, Elis and Hibou (1999) called “criminalisation” of the African state apparatus from colonial independence onwards. The fact that many African state leaders did not dispose of the empirical qualities of state sovereignty (Jackson 1987) or produce enough goods (materiel as well as immaterial) to meet the needs of their own population, but remained rather extremely dependent on the international economy to serve their needs, often left them with few options except to battle political opponents in markets, which became the foundation of political authority (Reno 1998).⁸

Deprived of real sovereignty, the Zairian ruling elite traded every minimum parcel of power and transformed it into new opportunities. According to Herdt and Marysse (1996:29), Zaire was transformed in the 1980s into a “mafia-like enterprise, abusing its power and using all possible means to enrich itself to the disadvantage of the population”. Power was privatised and led to what Evans (1995) called the predatory state, “where the invisible hand of the market dominates the administrative behaviour, creating a caricature of the neo-utilitarian image of how state officials act” (Evans 1995:46). The result of this process was often a “reciprocal assimilation” (Bayart *et al.*, 1999) between local vested interests and an emerging comprador bourgeoisie that was set up to guard and abet existing property rights (Bates 1981).⁹ This gave rise to several power brokers, including the Nande, among competing forces in the economic arena.

The second evolution was the so-called informalisation of the economy. Terms such as parallel, unrecorded, black, shadow and second economy are used to designate the largely unrecorded but dominant economic activities that happen in the informal sector of many African countries. Indeed, for some people, it is only a response to the economic crisis ravaging Africa now, and it will disappear once the crisis is over. For others, it is the real economy of the people. Janet MacGaffey (1991) talked about the “real economy” to signify what people live on. For William Johnson, it is the real market that is to be introduced in the theory of international exchange:

If economic theory indicates that in a situation of perfect market concurrence, the equilibrium between supply and demand establishes the right prices of goods and services in the market, many analyses show that the real market prices integrate not only their exact values, but also the social and environmental conditions of the production. They are in general determined by the equilibrium of forces between economic actors, which is not the simple result of purely economic conditions, but also the product of historical circumstances and social and political conditions in different countries (Johnson 2003:73).

By withholding resources from the state and locating politics at the lower level of the society, people formed new mechanisms of self-sufficiency outside state structures, and held the potential to formulate a new social arrangement that stood in opposition to the predatory state. This is also known as “the exit option.”

The contemporary production of the Nande trading network should be sought in these evolutions as a response to the failure of the Zairian government to provide its citizens with sustainable livelihoods. Capitalising on the exodus of many European traders and settlers during the period of political turmoil in the later 1950s and the early 1960s, the Nande quickly learnt to take advantage of the decline of state controls on the region's economy; which resulted in the rise of a new class of traders and the development of a widespread parallel economy. Smuggling gold (locally mined by primitive methods) out of the country became a means of raising capital for more legitimate businesses that could be established later on (e.g., coffee production and export, transport of locally grown vegetables to urban markets, and construction contracting). Gold has also provided access to hard currency with which to purchase import merchandise and pharmaceutical goods to meet the demand of a growing market in eastern Congo. The central thesis of MacGaffey's work (1987) is that entrepreneurs like the Nande in North Kivu who are not closely tied to the state have contributed significantly more to local development than the state parasites who drain off the region's wealth without giving much in return. The Zairian parasitic state comprises part of the ideological origins of the Nande trading networks; ideological because it constitutes part of the context and conditions of possibilities of the emergence of Nande trading networks.

Historical Origins of Nande Trading Networks

The introduction of cash crops such as coffee, cinchona, papaya, pyrethrum, etc. by the colonial power can be cited as the most important agricultural retail system the Nande inherited. In fact, the colonial retail trade is at the basis of the survival of Nande trust network. The Protestant mission situated at 12 kilometres north of Butembo is also an important element of the maintenance of the Nande trust network. The great majority of members of Nande trading networks started

their businesses by trading agricultural products such as coffee and vegetables. Members of Nande trust networks were also rooted in the Protestant mission of Katwa.¹⁰ And finally, to a much smaller extent, most of the pioneers had collaborated with Greek merchants from whom they learned about trades. The double origin of Protestant ethics and colonial retail trade illustrates the network's epistemological ambiguity. On the one hand, the network expressed itself through Protestant morale and, on the other hand, it was engaged in an informal enterprise that largely operated in opposition to the Belgian colonial system and later to the Zairian predatory regime. This reflects an anchoring of the Nande trust network in the historical practices of indirect rule and unfree labour.

According to Vwakyankazi (1982), the innovation of Butembo traders is rooted in social adaptation: profoundly influenced by the social roots from which it emerged, this phenomenon is likely to persist because it essentially thrives on the social divisions that characterise the peripheral society. Inspired by a Protestant free market, the Nande network simultaneously reflected the sharp divisions of colonial society by reconfirming the exploitation of rural masses. After Independence, many Protestant traders opened shops in Butembo and were able to challenge the Greeks who remained in the country (Mirembe 2002). Some Catholics also joined them in this business. Catholics and Protestants alike boosted their business in 1974 when President Mobutu nationalised everything belonging to foreigners. In Butembo, the Greeks had to leave, and their shops and coffee plantations were given to Mobutu's friends who, in turn, sold them to people talented in trade (Mafikiri 2002). From then on, newly powerful traders emerged and the cross-border trade with Uganda and trade with cities such as Kisangani, Goma, Bunia, Isiro began to flourish (Vwakyankazi 1982). Nande traders were selling coffee in Uganda; but in other cities in the Congo, it was potatoes, beans, vegetables, onions, and other agricultural products. Even today, traders are predominantly Protestants. This religious affiliation is important because it underscores the difference between two modes of colonial subjugation - the Protestant British in Uganda and the Catholic in the Congo. Today, many traders in Butembo continue to honour the legacy of their father figure, the American Baptist missionary Paul Hurlburt, known as *Horobe*, in a Kinande misspelling of the American surname. The combination of a conservative Protestant spirit and the development of productive enterprise were the basic legacies of the American missionaries.

Notes

1. Indeed, many successful capitalists have donated to charities and social welfare project through history. However, their main motivation is not social service, it's profit-making. Nande traders are not different, but their search for profit is inseparably linked to their belonging to their community.

2. In this study I will rather use the expression “relational resources” in place of “social capital” to convey the idea of individuals’ ability to mobilize resources through continued relationships of trust with other members of the networks. I shun the expression “social capital” because the term ‘capital’ is known historically to convey a specific sort of relation of exploitation between labour and those who own the means of production (Marx: Capital I). In other words, capital refers first of all to relations of production in which producers of the surplus do not themselves lay initial claim to the surplus that they produce. Instead, the surplus is taken from them without compensation.
3. The term *buaqiao* is used to designate Chinese immigrants. *Hua* is a name the Chinese have long used for their country. *Qiao* means to stay away from home temporarily.
4. In Yira tradition, while male infidelity is more or less tolerated, female infidelity is not a reason for divorce. But, the husband who is cheated will receive six goats from his wife’s lover as expression of remorse and reconciliation. While the bribe price is 12 goats paid only once, the six goats resulting from infidelity could be paid as many times as this happened. It is a peculiar inversion of the notion of the cuckold, who is said in Mediterranean cultures to have horns like goat, i.e. everyone can see them except him. Here, the more goats one possesses, the more one has turned misfortune (the wife’s infidelity) into material gain.
5. Kibangu’s son and grandson tell this story to their visitors in Butembo. I was among those in 2006. A slightly different version of the same story could be found in Raeymaekers’ *The Power of Protection*, 2007, pp62-63
6. The same division is found among *Yira*’s neighbours such as the *Toro*, *Ankole* and *Bunyoro*.
7. Even though there is no official opposition to the *Mwami*, Nande structure of power had this figure of “*mughula*” who was allowed to contradict or oppose the *Mwami* in questions of common interests.
8. Raeymaekers T, 2007, *The Power of Protection: Governance and Transborder Trade on the Congo-Uganda Frontier*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. In this section, I followed Raeymaekers’ argument very closely.
9. idem
10. Not to be confused with Katwe which was a place in today’s Uganda where Nande people went to look for salt in pre-colonial and colonial periods. Katwa is a Baptist mission in the outskirt of Butembo where the majority of today’s Nande traders had learned the principles of puritan life and the Protestant work ethic.

5

Strategies and Structural Frameworks that Facilitated Economic Growth in the Nande Region

As earlier stated, the first thing that motivated people to leave their home and descend into the dangerous Semeliki Valley was the need to gather as much salt as they could. Expeditions of caravans to acquire salt were the most important long-distance economic activity during the pre-colonial period. Butembo already played an important role in this trade. At the time, the village called Lusambo, which is now part of Butembo, was a stopover for caravans coming from Katwe on expeditions for salt (Kambalume 1972). From the salt trade Nande people learned the dangers and the benefits of long-distance commercial activities including confrontation with dangerous animals and creating friendships through distribution of salt. During the colonial period, dangers and incentives to trade were constituted by various restrictions imposed by the colonial power, especially around the cash crops and border crossing. In terms of incentives to trading activities, the work ethic taught by Baptist missionaries was very important during the colonial area. Even today, Nande traders attribute their success partly to the lessons learned in the Protestant mission. During the post-colonial period, the main income generating activities were coffee production and gold smuggling for trade. The commodity chains of these two products, including the trade routes and the markets where they are sold will be discussed as part of the framework that facilitates the Nande economic success.

Protestant Missionary Work in the Nande Region¹

In order to better understand the role played by Protestant missionaries, it is important to note that the Catholic Church was the third leg of the triumvirate that dominated the Belgian-Congo alongside the state and foreign capital. The state was in charge of administration, the Belgian entrepreneurs constituted the

extractive branch of the colonial power and the Catholic Church had to prepare individual souls to understand that their salvation would come from their ability to help the state and foreign capital. The Catholic Church came as a part of the colonial package. The Protestant Church had to fight to find a place in the colonial Congo.

The Baptist missionary Paul Hurlburt is recognised by Nande people for having introduced two main elements: education and commercial enterprise. He translated the Bible into *Kinande* and introduced a scheme for raising small pigs. These pigs reproduced much faster than other livestock like cows and were easily sold on the market by mission members.

Relationships between different Protestant missions along the Congo-Uganda border were a determinant for the emergence of Nande transnational trade between the two countries: mission members frequently travelled on both sides, taking with them various goods and contacts.

Paul Hurlburt belonged to the Unevangelised Africa Mission (UAM), which was founded in 1927 by a figure who had already established a legacy for having been largely responsible for the early success of the African Inland Mission (AIM) in Kenya and in northern Zaire. Charles Hurlburt, secretary of the Young Philadelphia School of the Bible and chairman of the first AIM board of directors, had first gone to Kenya in 1887 in an effort to save the floundering efforts of the first party of AIM missionaries. Peter Cameron Scott, the founding figure for AIM in Kenya, had arrived in 1895 and died in 1897; most of the others who had come with him were forced to abandon their efforts. Three years after the initial exploratory trip to East Africa, Charles Hurlburt came back with his entire family, and the following year he established an AIM mission station at Kijabe (Nelson 1992:29). His youngest son, Paul, was six at the time and grew up learning to speak Kikamba, Kikuyu and Swahili.

Charles Hurlburt is celebrated for having been a visionary strategist, often pouring over maps of Africa and imagining AIM mission stations extending out in all directions from Kijabe, as far as “Azandeland” to the west. As the story goes, the goal of opening up mission stations in north-eastern Zaire was facilitated by Teddy Roosevelt who had been invited by Charles Hurlburt during his last year in the White House, to visit Kijabe while on a hunting trip to Africa. Roosevelt was entertained by missionaries at Kijabe on several occasions in 1909 (*idem*, p. 30). He was asked by the missionaries to submit a request to King Albert of Belgium, with whom he had scheduled to have a conference on his return trip to the United States, to secure permission for AIM missionaries to begin working in the Belgian Congo. With that permission granted and a letter drafted for the AIM to present to colonial officials, an exploratory trip across Uganda and into

the Congo (just west of Lake Albert, now Lake Mobutu) was made in 1910 by AIM missionaries. They were assured by a local “*Chef de poste*” that they were welcome to begin work. Eighteen months later, a small party of missionaries settled there (Stauffer 1978:80-84).

Early Missionary Developments in Kivu

Paul Hurlburt was educated in the United States beginning 1910. He attended a Presbyterian school in Los Angeles. He joined his father's efforts in the Belgian-Congo in 1917, after recovering from a near fatal accident². Paul Hurlburt worked at the AIM mission station at Abba during most of this early period, assuming the responsibilities of deputy general director of the mission. The Hurlburts and other missionary families arrived in Africa in 1928, travelling across Tanzania by rail and proceeding to Bukavu, in Kivu, by boat and truck. From there, they took a boat across Lake Kivu to Sake and then continued to Masisi by foot, where they remained as guests at a Swedish mission while deciding where to settle. While they were there, the recently pacified Lubero territory was suggested to Hurlburt as a place to begin work. The place appealed to the missionaries as they were told that it was well populated. The fact that it was a high altitude country, above 5,500 feet, encouraged them as well. Charles Hurlburt had learned from experience in Kenya that incidences of malaria were greatly reduced at higher altitudes.

With a hundred porters carrying their supplies, the Hurlburt family went ahead of the rest of the party through a thickly forested region to arrive at Lubero. Paul Hurlburt knew Swahili from his childhood days in Kenya and was able to communicate with many Africans who had learned the simplified dialect of Swahili known as Kingwana while working on road-building crews. Paul Hurlburt quickly set about learning Kinande, the local dialect. His complete mastery of the language after several years became one of his hallmarks, endearing him to the Nande people, and eventually leading to a translation of the entire Bible into Kinande.

The small party of missionaries faced considerable resistance during the first year from the local government administrator who, representing mining interests, did not want missionaries working in the region. The missionaries appealed to the regional governor, during one of his visits from Stanleyville (Kisangani), and won the right to remain in the region. Then, with the work well under way, the missionaries began searching for an appropriate place to build a permanent settlement. Katwa (known as Misebere in the early days), 5km south of Butembo (the MGL headquarters), was suggested to them by an assistant administrator and, with permission from a local chief, the missionaries established their first permanent settlement. A second mission station, at Kitsombiro (meaning, the

place where grain is threshed), was selected because of its proximity to the new road, its nearby water supply, and the density of the population in the area. The construction of mud huts began with the assistance of some of the early converts to the movement. A growing group of students were attracted to the opportunity to become acquainted with whites and to learn from them. They were soon learning to read and write, and they felt that their lives were being transformed by the new cosmos of meaning presented to them in the Christian gospel the missionaries taught (Nelson *op. cit.* p. 32).

Bahorobe and their Work Ethic as Origins of Nande Trading Network

As the mission strategy became further established, sincere converts from the village were brought to the mission (after an initial period of training by the village teacher-evangelist) to participate in six months of preparation for baptism; the training of new teacher-evangelists, picked from among the baptismal candidates, became more extensive. Village teacher-evangelists would maintain a house on the mission station, which they would make available to their students while participating in the baptism preparation. The mission station, thus, became a very active community with a sizable population of people who received minimal stipends (e.g., house servants, building supervisors, teachers, medical dispensary workers). In addition, members of the leper colony (over 250 by 1946) stayed at the mission for shorter periods, along with teacher-evangelists (generally over 100 students at a time were at the mission station). Various others, as well, found refuge at the mission and were permitted to live there, provided they conformed to community requirements (as many as 150 families in later years). A number of other programmes were added to the mission effort. An orphanage for mulatto children (most of them children of Greek fathers who were merchants in Kivu) was established in 1934 in response to requests for such an institution. Housing and schooling, separate from the African community, were provided for these children. Initially, much of the cost was provided by the children's fathers, who turned to the mission for help in raising and educating their unwanted children. According to Nelson, in 1945, there were approximately six children of all ages in the orphanage, with the boys residing at Kitsombiro and the girls residing at Katwa. Maintaining these programmes became the major preoccupation of missionaries Helen Hurlburt and Emilia Buchanan, the wife of another missionary.

Another programme was a resident school for girls. Girls were educated in a Christian environment at the mission. These girls effectively defined a pool for teacher-evangelists to select wives, and Hurlburt himself often arranged the marriages, aiding young men in acquiring their requisite bride wealth of twelve goats. By 1946, the school had expanded to accommodate 150 resident girls (Muteho 1981).

A strong communal identity built on adherence to the principles taught by the missionaries became a hallmark of both the Katwa and Kitsombiro communities and extended to the many villages where teacher-evangelists worked. Among outsiders, these people came to be referred to as *Baborobe* (Hurlburt's people) and were respected within for their conformity to high moral standards and for their energetic efforts. Confession of the Christian Faith was required. Even if the significance of such a confession was not always clearly understood, what converts did understand however was that their deeds were closely watched, and that formed the real criterion of membership in the community. Katwa became the "city on the hill," a separate community where people participated in Christian worship and instruction, enjoyed a good deal of social support, and either conformed to strict moral codes or were evicted from the community. A very literal application of the instructions given by the Apostle Paul to the church of Corinth was enforced: "You must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler, With such man do not even eat... Expel the wicked man from among you" (1 Corinthians 5:11, 13).

Any breach of moral codes was dealt with quickly. Culprits would be brought before Hurlburt and elders of the church, if accused of smoking, drinking, stealing, lying, adultery, and so forth. If a young person was suspected of sexual promiscuity or drinking, the parents were held accountable. If guilty persons confessed, they could remain in the community, but were prohibited from participating in communion service for several months. If they did not repent, they were immediately evicted (*walifukuzwa*) from the community: their belongings were removed from their home, packed up, carried off the mission property, and dumped. Such evictions were not uncommon in the early days of the mission and left a strong impression on members of the community. If they later confessed and demonstrated willingness to conform, they would be welcomed back into the community, but would be expected to refrain from participation in communion services for a probationary period. There was strong social pressure against even leaving the mission station without permission. As a trader recalled during an interview, they "had to sneak out to learn what Butembo was like or to witness aspects of local village life, including traditional dances".

What evolved at Katwa and Kitsombiro, was a very different way of life from the one people were accustomed to. Those who were leaders at Katwa, for example, acknowledged that many people conformed out of fear and social pressure, but they also felt that most developed strong personal convictions that bound them to the community's mores (Nelson 38). Indeed, as the Comaroffs (1991) point out, a great deal of attention is increasingly placed on the figure of missionaries at the awakening of modern Africa. Were they agents of imperialism,

well-intended philanthropists or benign-imperialists? (2001:7). Notwithstanding the answers to these questions, it remains true in the Congo as well as in many parts of Africa, that the impact of Protestant evangelists as harbinger of industrial capitalism lay in the fact that their civilising mission was simultaneously symbolic and practical, theological and temporal.

As the Comaroffs rightly said, “The goods and techniques missionaries brought to Africa presupposed the messages and the meanings they proclaimed in the pulpit, and vice versa. Both were vehicles of a moral economy that celebrated the global spirit of commerce, the commodity, and the imperial marketplace”. (1991:9). However, both the UAM in Butembo and the Non-conformist missionaries the Comaroffs talked about, were part of the colonising machine whose essence inheres less in political rule than in seizing and transforming “others” by the very act of conceptualising, inscribing, and interacting with them on terms not of their choosing. While this discussion is beyond the scope of this study, one must recognise that the Baptist mission in the Nande region did indeed reorganise relations of production by abetting the penetration of capitalism and fostering a strong sense of self-reliance, planning and entrepreneurship.

Even today, the work ethic taught by Hurlburt is remembered, especially by many successful traders as one of his greatest contributions to the region. Hurlburt is recalled as having always insisted on the fact that joining the community did not mean a free ride for anyone; rather, it bound one to the productive efforts of the collective. Members of the community, including currently successful traders, noted a number of significant aspects of this work ethic. Kamungele, one of the most prominent traders in Butembo summarised the legacy of the Katwa missionary in three points: first, a dedication to hard, honest work (e.g., working hard even when the boss was absent); second, a demand not to waste earnings on alcohol and prostitutes; and finally, the importance of learning to delay gratification. Although it was to be a volatile issue, the belief that one would be compensated in heaven for one’s efforts was a significant aspect of Bahorobe consciousness. In addition, one’s responsibility to contribute to the community as a productive member of collective work projects is recalled as having been deeply inculcated over the years into members of the community. Today, traders still pay back to the community; they participate in the development of the region, especially in education and healthcare.

Mbogha (1975) noted that the entrepreneurial spirit is one of the legacies of American missionaries in the Nande region. Many traders did not study and were therefore excluded from professions as teachers or civil servants. Peasants in the villages were obliged to cultivate certain types of products and were subject to many other constraints which limited their freedom of movement. Therefore, trade was the remaining choice, even though it was also subject to many colonial constraints (Piron and Devos 1951).

Despite the constraints, some did become involved in transnational trading. Indeed, the emergence of an entrepreneurial ethos in the Nande region during this period does not, in any simple or causal sense, reveal the Protestant ethic as the source of an emerging spirit of capitalism (à la Max Weber). But there is no question that the practical involvement of Nande converts in the activities of the Protestant mission that facilitated their emergence as a trading class.

After the independence of the Congo and the subsequent political turmoil, a small group of Baptists fled the Congo and settled in Uganda, yet they remained close to the border. This Ugandan settlement allowed some Nande traders from the Congo to find not only accommodation and storage, but also information during their trips to Uganda. From the core of Baptist traders, many kin and friends were initiated into commercial activities.

Although Nande authors and traders recognise the role missionaries played in the development of the traders' spirit of entrepreneurship, it is an epistemological jump to link the initial phase of the Nande's trust network directly to the Protestant work ethic. Even Max Weber resisted such a direct causal interpretation.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the Nande were far from capitalism as understood by Max Weber. The Nande trading enterprise had a combination of both capitalist and non-capitalist elements. This is a characteristic found in many African businessmen and businesswomen. Since the beginning of the 1996 war in the DRC, for instance, many Nande businessmen have re-invested their profits in real estate. In a purely Western capitalist perspective, this undermines the prospect of a growing economy (Garlic 1971; Marris and Sommerset 1971). The same can be said for the inclusion of family and friends into business enterprises. The family's continuous demands to share businessmen's profit encourage the latter to conceal their investment in private real estate. While this move impedes traders' managerial plans, investing in housing and farms could constitute an economic security in the event of a collapse of the main business venture (Kennedy 1988). Taken this way, African proprietors are not very different from their Western counterparts; they all count on diversified social relations to develop their risky businesses (Granovetter 1973:1985). But, as Raeymaekers (2007) argues, unlike their Western counterparts, African entrepreneurs often do not dispose of the legal protection to transform their accumulated investment into "live" capital.

It is noteworthy that the distinction between market and non-market, capitalist and non-capitalist economic and social practices cannot simply be considered as a threshold crossed by the acceptance of either a Protestant work ethic or by the transformation of dead capital into a live one. This threshold is not a thin line, but a terrain which has been riddled with tension and conflict. It is a battleground frontier that covers the entire region of what we call capitalism. The history of this battle is indeed ambiguous and characterised by lots of complicity and

overlaps. In the DRC, this overlap includes capitalist and non-capitalist forms of economic enterprise, formal and informal, state and non-state forms of regulations. The Nande have attempted to create mechanisms and frameworks that move people and assets from one economic sphere to another. Their success is based in a collective search for constant balance between social embeddedness – economic actions enmeshed with social relations – and a search for social autonomy vis-à-vis the original spatial, economic and mental boundaries of the group for the accumulation purposes. The Nande trust network practices differ from other informal trust-based practices like *guanxi* in pre-reform China or *blat* capitalism in Russia which have to concentrate on avoiding the crackdown by the socialist central governments (Ledeneva 2008), in that the Nande have to constantly balance centrifugal tendencies that help to form bridges with other groups and centripetal forces that give the Nande network its social and cultural cohesion. Both tendencies are indispensable for the survival of Nande trust network.

Thus, the agricultural retail trade system introduced by the Belgians played a comparably important role in facilitating commercial activities. Nande's trading skills can be traced back to their caravan trade relations, but they really took off with the impulse from the division of labour between countryside and towns, the entrepreneurial spirit of saving and hard work introduced by Protestant missionaries, and the transfer of business skills by Greek and other Asian traders in Butembo to local personnel they engaged in their shops as tenants or messenger boys. The Congo's political independence in the 1960s coincided with the emergence of a class of intermediary traders. The success of this class drives a growing number of Nande traders into retail business, as witnessed today in Butembo and its hinterlands.

The city of Butembo

Butembo was established in 1928 and became the centre for the administration of the *Miniere des Grands Lacs* (MGL), which owned the mineral concession in the North Kivu area and dominated early development of the region. Mines were eventually opened up in a number of locales: Manguredjipa (the most lucrative mining area), Etaitu, Tuteri, Lutungulu, Muhanga and Bela (Musekwa 1975:10). By 1945, some areas had employed one-third of the male population in the mines or in some other wage-earning occupation (Packard 1981:184).

Other drastic changes were instituted in an effort to mobilise labour and to increase agricultural production in the region. An extensive village consolidation programme was begun in 1932, forcing the population out of small hamlets and into large villages where it was required that huts be built in symmetrical rows. Mud and wattle hut construction was mandated to replace the round, banana

leaf-covered structures that people previously inhabited. Further, the construction of separate cooking huts, latrines, and separate quarters for livestock was enforced by colonial authorities. These new arrangements radically changed interpersonal relations, resulting in increased fear of sorcery accusations and feuding, against which punishments were levied. State-backed supervisors, *capitas*, were put in charge of villages to enforce compliance with colonial requirements.

Beside the forced labour requirements on road construction projects, extensive agricultural quotas were introduced, increasing demands on the peasants. New crops were introduced and assignments were made to individuals regarding plot size and the types of crops they should produce. Failure to comply could result in whippings and/or imprisonment. “*Contoires*” were set up and money was exchanged for produce. Greek merchants began offering much sought after manufactured goods (e.g., cotton cloth, pots and pans) that added an incentive to people’s efforts.

Present-day Butembo

For visitors arriving in Butembo for the first time, the “border city” appears big. The main streets connecting the city from north to south are lined with brick buildings, full of shops and stores. Some buildings are in blue marble surfaces and give Butembo the impression of a wealthy city. Taxi buses, trucks and motorcycles drive people and goods in and out of the market and surrounding stores. The climate is a mix of high altitude (1,200/1,400 metres) and the tropical forest. Butembo is located between the Albertine rift valley in the east and a vast mineral rich forest in the west, which extends to Kisangani in Central Congo. This forest contains gold, diamond and tin ore. The mountains have a heavy rainy season with Rwenzori reaching to 5,109 metres of altitude at the highest point (*point Marberite*). Despite its climatic conditions, Butembo’s demography has increased over the last ten years. From 1970 to 1980, the population of Butembo went from 28,103 to 65,000 (Vwakyanakazi 1982).

Table 2: Demographic Evolution of the City of Butembo

Year	1957	1958	1965	1975
Population	10,916	11,189	19,975	50,921
Year	1985	1995	1998	2006
Population	83,001	137,621	143,493	600,000

Source: Mayor Office/Butembo

From 1957 to 1998, population growth was around 6.4 per cent annually, resulting in a remarkable growth to roughly thirteen times its population over four decades. In the eight year period from 1998 to 2006, however, the total population more than quadrupled. The population increase was due to the growing insecurity, and the expansion of the city limits in 2003, when Butembo grew from 25 to 196 square kilometres. The latter shows that the sudden rise in population is partly an illusion because a much larger area is now included as part of its municipal jurisdiction. Nonetheless, the recent history of Butembo is one of remarkable and rapid growth.

The phenomenal increase of the population is visible at the Butembo central market area, which is stuffed with mini-shops, shops, and boutiques selling various items ranging from Chinese plastics to motorcycle spares and textiles from Bangkok and the US. Around the market stand *nganda* (popular bars) where Primus beer sustains conversations, and roasted chicken or goat meat is sold. During the last five years, hotels and guest houses have been constructed. Hotel Butembo has provided a modern alternative to the town's oldest hotel, *l' Auberge*. "*Joli Rêve*" (sweet dreams) is a guest house known for its cuisine. These new hotels belong to Nande traders. *L'Auberge* belongs to Pay Pay wa Swaksighe, formerly Mobutu's governor of the Zairian Central Bank. The neighbourhoods in Butembo look like interconnected villages. Vwakyanakazi contends that the Nande's use of the space is dictated more by economic incentives than family organisation (1982:92). In lieu of traditional huts built around the home of the *Chef du village* (village headman) home, Butembo's compounds are dominated by commercialism, usually small shops where cigarettes, drying manioc, coffee or tea is sold. The same spaces serve as the home dwellings of extended families. Most of the time, traders have two or three buildings, which serve respectively as kitchen, family home, and commercial building. Except in the MGL, a neighbourhood named after the former Belgian mineral company in the Kivu where some traders live, the rich and the poor inhabit Butembo side by side. However, the size of the buildings differentiates families' status. Madrabi, the Nande trader who owns Hotel Butembo, has a mansion with 28 bedrooms, 8 living rooms and three kitchens.

The rich Nande remain very much culturally rooted in their culinary tradition. The simplicity of appearance is also part of this cultural heritage. It is part of their moral economy not to demonstrate their wealth, but instead to live soberly and abstemiously, except for the grand buildings and the spectacular marriages.

From any hilltop in Butembo, one will observe the growing wealth of the city. New villas are being constructed by traders. In Bulenghera (12km square) in 2006, 10 new buildings could be discovered per square kilometre, representing a value of USD 200,000 to USD 350,000. The "*gallery Tsongo Kasereka*" reportedly

cost around 3 million USD. The total value of the real estate in Butembo can be estimated to be between 20 to 35 million USD. Real estate has skyrocketed during the recent years.

The questions one might asks are: where does the money come from? How do they accumulate so much? And economically minded people will add; why is it held in such “defective” form? It must be noted that the emerging property market in Butembo comes from an illustration of the embeddedness of economic activity in the local community. Unlike the capital flight experienced in the rest of the DRC and other African countries, in Butembo, profits are invested into the same environment where the houses are built. The specificity of Butembo (and the interest of this study) is that there is no legal system of certificate and capital representation to protect the Nande property as in a Westerner capitalist environment. They operate an “invisible” and “informal” system of insurance and relationships.

Products Exported by Nande Traders

Butembo commercial tradition predates the current era of globalisation. Vwakyanakazi (1982:2) noted that in the 1970s, 75 to 80 per cent of individual households in Butembo were already selling goods ranging from agricultural foodstuffs to small household necessities. Today, at every corner of Butembo, there are mini-shops, boutiques, and galleries offering cellphone cards at US\$1 or US\$5 a piece, or high-quality computer equipment, or motorbikes, etc. Eighteen-year-olds or younger boys sell prime necessities like soap, salt. Market women usually sell foodstuff like onions, beans and tomatoes, or ‘*arague*’ (alcoholic maize drink). These petty trades provide the cash needed to cover a family’s immediate concerns or school fees. Above this level, there is what Akeredolu-Ale (1971) refers to as trade for business growth. The retail trade in cars, computers, textile, or electric engines, is not different from what is taking place in the globalised world, except for the level of bargaining involved. Everything on the market of Butembo, from the quality of the product to the merchandise delivery, is subject to endless bargaining between the vendors and clients.

A great majority of the Nande population is involved in agriculture, including many of the merchants themselves. As stated earlier, many traders began as peasants in their villages. In the city as well as in the countryside, agriculture is conducted for both subsistence and the commercial market. Some products are for consumption while others are partially or wholly destined for the market in order to acquire other goods. If retail products such as coffee, cinchona, papaya, and pyrethrum are grown strictly for commercialisation, staple food crops are grown for immediate consumption or for commercialisation, depending on whether there is sufficient surplus and market opportunity. This was the case, for

example, when beans were in high demand in Kisangani and Kinshasa in the 1970s. Since the price of coffee has dropped, peasants in Beni have returned to the cultivation of food crops. It is clear that demographic growth produces a pressure on land in the high-altitude regions of eastern Congo. Illegal occupation of a space is quickly noticed, and land conflicts are very common. Reluctantly, people are moving to lower altitude lands. Moreover, people are whittling away land belonging to the Virunga National Park. In Butembo, the high degree of sociocultural homogeneity may be explained as a consequence of rural exodus. Many inhabitants of Butembo come from peasant backgrounds and have often retained the peasant way of life in the city. Most agricultural work is done collectively as there is a very strong sense of reciprocity and mutual obligation in rural areas. Thus, among the Nande, the first means of economic accumulation is agriculture. Even though prices for agricultural goods are not very competitive, the daily market in town allows for the sale of significant quantities of produce. In addition to many who sell their own products, there are also merchants who specialise in re-selling agricultural goods. The latter buy merchandise at the weekly markets in the rural areas. Peasants also buy manufactured goods at these markets, forming a link between the rural and urban areas. If agriculture is at the base of commercial activities, however, investment in agriculture is very rare. In Butembo, investment is not yet focused on the transformation of agricultural products. Many traders are nonetheless involved in cattle breeding activities. It is rather a refuge for capital than an opportunity for making returns on investments. Indeed local commercial dynamics evolved in complementary waves: general commerce of vegetables, manufactured products in the region, export of coffee and gold. Coffee and gold are historically the sources of income for today's Nande traders, and they allow Nande traders to consolidate and reproduce their network.

Coffee Exports as a Source of Capital

Coffee used to be the main export product.³ Prior to the civil war, it represented 75 per cent of all national export revenues from agricultural products⁴, and was the third major product of export after diamonds and copper. Coffee was exported almost exclusively to Europe (Belgium, France and Switzerland). With high demands for coffee in Europe, its export was at the heart of major capital accumulation in the Beni and Lubero territories, especially in the 1970s and 1980s when the world price skyrocketed. During this period, a dozen factories were created in the region for the treatment of coffee. When the price of coffee declined on the world market, many of these factories went bankrupt.

Table 3: Coffee Export Statistics from 1996 to 2000

Year	Arabica export US \$	Arabica exports in kg	Robusta export US \$	Robusta exports in kg	Total value in US \$
1996	3,357,720	7,575,427.4	10,272,540	18,689,534.5	26,264,961.9
1997	1,752,300	4,355,186.4	4,114,620	4,583,509	8,938,695.4
1998	2,841,540	6,761,501.9	3,633,180	4,484,434	8,045,981.8
1999	2,533,740	3,561,547.8	4,352,520	4,484,434	8,045,981.8
2000	2,466,900	3,264,108.4	3,001,260	1,778,717.4	5,042,825.8

Source: Office national du Café, ONC, Beni

As the table shows, the advent of civil war in 1996 dramatically, but not surprisingly, reduced coffee exports. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise that, in fact, the statistics above underestimate the reality of the coffee market (especially in the post-civil war period). Many exports were conducted outside the official bank circuits; credit documents were not on the books. Rather, vendors sent the documents directly to buyers, via DHL or FedEx. Money was paid through a third party's bank account.

Moreover, a portion of the coffee from Eastern Congo goes to the Ugandan market and is re-exported officially by Uganda. These practices are made possible by proximity to Uganda, the difference in prices between the two countries, and the opportunity to acquire manufactured goods from Uganda. Other products like papaya, wood and minerals, are also exported from the region. As Butembo's prosperity attests, the carnage of civil war has also supplied very substantial opportunities for capital accumulation, and also for cross-border and transnational trade. The role coffee played in the 1970s and 1990s in consolidating trade and reproducing the Nande network capital accumulation is being played today by gold. However, gold was the first product Nande traders exported to constitute the first capital for the production and sale of coffee.

Gold Exports as Source of Income

Many traders returned to exporting gold when the coffee business was no longer generating enough value. In the 1950s and after the independence in the 1960s, gold was first smuggled into neighbouring Uganda to raise the necessary capital to start more legal business activities, such as coffee export and vegetable transport within cities.

Gold is the principal mineral exported from the region as well as neighbouring countries. It came from many places – around Manguredjipa, at 90km west of Butembo, and Ituri in the Orientale Province. The revenues were transferred in hard currency in other counties by traders to pay for their import. Gold is not exported via banks or authorised counters. There are no statistics available for the trade in the region, but it is widely known that gold was widely exploited there. In the 1980s, for example, only one counter was authorised to buy gold in the region. Seven local brokers were working in relation to this official counter, but the brokers had their own networks of merchants who bought gold directly from diggers.

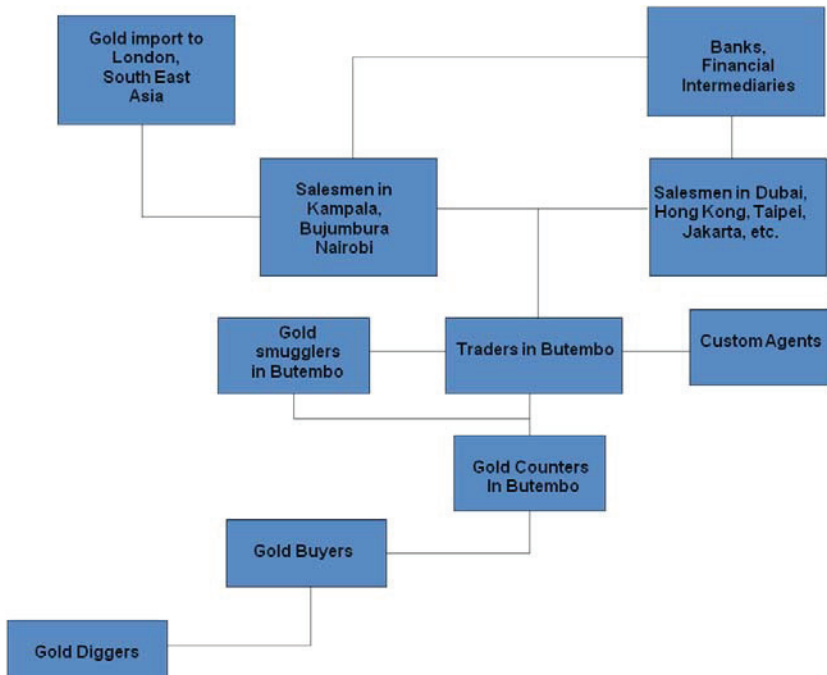
A hundred merchants were registered in the “*Bureau territorial de Mine et Énergie*” in Butembo. They had their own “*contoirs*”. By the end of the 1980s, 50 per cent of Nande traders were principally buyers and exporters of gold, which served as a protected embodiment of value against subsequent depreciations of the national currency (Mirembe p.148). With the dollarisation of the economy and the increased possibility of transferring money internationally, however, gold played this role to a far lesser degree than previously.

There are two types of gold in the Butembo region: dry gold⁵ found in flakes and small nuggets in unconsolidated mineral deposits in riverbeds or topsoil (Fahey 2008). It is obtained through open pit mining and alluvial mining. Amalgam gold is extracted from rocks obtained through underground mining and open mining. It is the gold produced most in Butembo and its hinterland, especially Manguridjipa in the east of the city. To exploit amalgam gold, young men and sometimes women crush the rocks. Once the rocks are pulverised into a fine dust, the powder is processed to extract the gold. The dust may be mixed with water and washed down a wooden slide covered in a wool blanket; bits of gold settle out in the blanket and are removed when the blanket is washed by hand in a water-filled plastic basin. Another method involves mixing the rock dust with water, mercury, and/or chemicals. After this treatment, the mixture is heated over a fire to evaporate the water, mercury or chemicals, leaving the amalgam gold. This is why amalgam gold is also known as fire gold. Nande traders buy gold from the hinterlands, and from the neighbouring region of Ituri.

The liberalisation of gold mining in 1982 in Kivu’s hinterlands created an opportunity for Nande traders to buy and own gold mines. Since then, they have smuggled gold to the neighbouring countries without going through the official counters. The processes of production are relatively simple because it does not require extensive work to extract gold in the area. The gold diggers are generally young and otherwise unemployed people who sell to the traders. Sometimes, gold is exchanged for clothes or foodstuff, which is provided by traders to the gold carriers. Apart from some individuals who smuggle grains of gold to

Uganda, the rest of the gold in the region ends up in the hands of Nande traders in Butembo, as the following diagram shows:

Commodity Chain of Gold in the Nande Region



Gold diggers are generally in rural areas. Intermediaries buy gold and sell it to brokers in Butembo. Brokers give an important quantity of gold to smugglers who hide it in different parts of the vehicles they drive to Kampala, Bujumbura or Nairobi. To successfully distribute, they are assisted by automobile mechanic specialists. To cross the border, they have to mobilise their relations with customs service agents and immigration control agents. Once in Kampala, Bujumbura or Nairobi, the smuggler delivers gold to the person in charge of importing it. The latter will re-export it through his networks to Europe or Asia. The payment of the Congolese exporter occurs through the transfer of funds via a bank or a financial intermediary in East Africa, or to a person in southeast Asia who can deliver the equivalent of manufactured goods to Butembo, according to an order received from the gold exporter. Merchandise is then delivered by a freight service and to the broker in charge of the shipment by road. To remain in the optic of the commodity chains theory, one needs to value each stage per unit of production. Here, indeed, diggers receive the lowest value added while the highest goes to

the final destinations in London or Antwerp. But, in the case of Nande traders who sell gold in Uganda or in Dubai or Hong Kong, the value added is also important. During the last ten years, gold has been exported principally to Uganda. The difference in prices between Butembo and Kampala justifies this traffic. In 2002, for example, a “tola” – i.e. 10 gr. – cost US\$100; but in Kampala, during the same year it was between US\$115 and US\$120.

A group of import-export traders, known as the G8, constitutes the top of the commercial hierarchy in Butembo and its hinterland. It consists of the eight richest people in Butembo. They have different geographical origins; yet, they are connected to other old trade routes to the coast. This group imports containers of manufactured commodities from East Africa, South Asia, and South East Asia.⁶ This group gradually acquired respect in the community and a central position in local politics. The G8 qualifies as a trust network because of high levels of internal cohesion and trust between members. Their wealth and management method make them a special, external network compared with the norm of the community. At the same time, they remain embedded in different webs of relations within the community; they engage with other actors of civil society, especially the Catholic Church, to develop infrastructure such as mending roads, building schools and health centres. Even though there are many cases of poverty in and around Butembo, the Nande trading bourgeoisie has had a wide and positive impact in the community.

Kisoni Kambale

Since the early 2000s, in the midst of the DRC second rebellion, Kisoni Kambale, who was the principal Nande trader and gold buyer, was able to make the first industrial treatment of gold by melting the gold mineral. Dr. Kisoni worked in Bujumbura for some years with a Belgian gold buyer known as Mr. Alain, from whom he learned the technique of putting gold into bars instead of selling the grains as the diggers do, a material change that creates a huge difference in value. Dr Kisoni was assassinated on July 2007 in his office in Butembo. It was 11 a.m. when three men posing as businessmen, entered Kisoni's office and shot him. According to local rumour, the three men escaped with some money. However, Kisoni's brother in-law refuted it. The three murderers were eventually arrested with three accomplices. Two of the men apprehended were Kenyans and the other four were Ugandans. All six entered the DRC from Uganda through the border city of Kasindi. Three Congolese were later arrested for Kisoni's murder. They are still in prison in Goma.

Prior to his assassination Doctor Kisoni was the main buyer of gold in Butembo. He was also the principal buyer of Mungwalu gold (Fahey 2008). Kisoni's name appeared on the 2005 report of Human Rights Watch because he was buying gold in the Ituri region in exchange for weapons. He would fly

weapons into war torn Ituri and fly back to Butembo with gold. In March 2007, four months before his murder, Kisoni's name was added to the UN sanction list, his assets were frozen, and he was forbidden to travel outside the Congo. He was the creditor of the rebellion in the Ituri region⁷. Dr Kisoni's company, the Congocom, melted ore into ingots before exporting it to Ugandan associates, particularly the Ugandan Commercial Impex (UCI), a gold exporting company.

Kisoni's path into the business world illustrates the changing nature of the Nande's trade network during the war period. Born by a Protestant priest, he went to pursue veterinary studies in Kisangani and then Lubumbashi. When he finished his studies, he married the daughter of one of the most prominent traders in Butembo. After the death of his father-in-law, he inherited the business and immediately invested money in exchanges with other traders and in the gold business between Butembo and Bujumbura. He was selling gold in Bujumbura to Mr. Goetz, a Belgian national who was a gold exporter. Kisoni experienced antagonism from his brothers-in-law who were claiming their share, so he gave back all family capital except his personal earnings.

He became a close ally to Mbusa Nyamuisi, a rebel leader in the region of Beni, and was appointed bursar of the rebels. All customs declarations, taxes, and import-export goods from Beni and Lubero passed through him. He became engaged in aviation and delivered munitions to rebels groups in exchange for gold from Mungwalu. Kisoni was one of the principal protagonists of the Congo war economy.

In 2000, columbine-tantalite (commonly known as coltan) became one of the major sources for income for some Nande traders. Kisoni was not involved in coltan. But coltan provided some traders with fast money. Between 2000 and 2003, its price was twice the price of the gold. Some Nande traders benefited from the high price of this mineral.

The price of coltan skyrocketed between 1994 and 2000. According to the Division of Mining and Energy in Butembo and the Congolese Office of Control (OCC) in Beni, more than 100 tonnes of coltan was exported annually during this period. Some exports were predictably made by bypassing official procedures. By the end of 2000, annual exports of coltan reached a million dollars. The global market price for coltan fell primarily because of international pressure, due to a perceived link between coltan exports and financing of the war in the Congo.

One junior trader, Bayoli, who is now a Member of Parliament for Butembo, said he became a millionaire in US dollars in 4 months because of the coltan trade. He had a German associate who sent him money and he bought coltan in the region and shipped it via Kampala to Germany. He started a telephone company that unfortunately did not take off because of the fierce competition

with Vodacom, the major South African telephone company in the Congo. Bayoli always thought about the switch from trade to industrial production in the region. The major obstacle to this transformation is the issue of security.

The profits made in North-eastern Congo are based more in trade than in poorly remunerated productive activities. Thus, the value of imports is inevitably higher than that of exports. Imports are therefore financed by other mechanisms. The monthly average of gold exports and dollar transfers is almost 2 million dollars per month; imports are paid for partly by exporters' earnings from the sales of gold, coffee, wood, cinchona, coltan, etc. and partly by transfers of dollars generated by local sale. All of this ultimately derives from production, but production costs are very cheap and exchange rates are favourable to spectacular profits.

However, in spite of widespread "informal" practices that evade official controls, there is also an important contribution to the public treasury from this external trade in terms of customs service payments. Officially, according to the Congo Central Bank, traders in Butembo alone contributed approximately 4 per cent of revenues from 1997 to 2000. Nande trading routes and markets have been very important in the accumulation of such revenues in the past as it is today. The Ugandan market, the Sudan route, the Kenyan network, the Bujumbura circuit, and the Asian route, have all contributed to the reproduction and maintenance of Nande trading network.

The Kampala Market

Generally, small and medium scale Nande traders regularly go to Kampala to buy manufactured products. While in Kampala, traders are helped by Konjo (Nande from Uganda) intermediaries. The Konjo live in the west of Uganda, in the district of Kasese. The Konjo help Nande traders get from place to place. They provide them with information about security, possibilities for storage, and the price of merchandise. Many traders acknowledge buying their merchandise overseas through brokers or wholesale dealers. The latter will accept an order from traders, take a deposit, buy merchandise from a factory or wholesale, and deliver it. In Uganda, the Nande have recourse to such brokers when they start their business. These brokers have a correct knowledge of produce location and the conditions related to their delivery. As soon as the traders become familiar with the place and can communicate in elementary Kiganda, however, they bypass the brokers. Congolese brokers are also available in Kenya, Nigeria, and Indonesia. In East Africa, most brokers are Indo-Pakistanis. In Asia, many brokers operate through international agencies.

After several years of using brokerage agencies, some traders prefer to go directly to factories, but others choose to continue with brokers to maintain their social relationships. Working through brokers is a way of building strong relational

resources between trade partners. The strength of these relationships may reduce the cost of transactions. Brokers are connected to many industries, with a great variety of favourable goods. The brokers are also industrial representatives, money transfer agents, cargo freight handlers, customs intermediaries, and may belong to other networks that specialise in these areas. They may also have representatives in other countries, such as Kenya. This helps the follow-up of freight documents and clearance through customs at the port of Mombasa, for example. Many brokers expand their businesses and become wholesalers or industrialists in their own right. With globalisation, they increasingly receive and centralise orders from all over the world. In Hong Kong, the *Amsua* group helps Nande traders in their transactions. This group has representatives, export offices, space for the storage of products such as electronic elements, travel bags, tools, implements, textiles, electronic kitchen appliances, etc. When the customs tariffs in the Congo were charged *ad valorem*, Nande traders could negotiate with tradesmen to under-value the bills.

Local traders are connected to the global economy through their contacts with international brokers. For many years, some Nande people have settled in Jakarta and opened agencies for transactions and brokerage. They explore the Indonesian market, receive orders by fax or e-mails from Butembo, buy merchandise and send it back to the Congo by freight cargo or by sea. This expedites the transaction of merchandise. Foreign currency has conventionally been transferred internationally outside any bank circuits. Every week, traders deposited their earnings with Dr Kisoni who used the money to buy gold and change it into bars to be shipped to Kampala where he sold it. He then deposited the money into each trader's bank account.⁸ More and more, however, traders increasingly use the International Bank of Credit (B.I.C), which makes international money transfers, and has had a branch in Butembo since 1996.⁹

Table 4: Foreign Currency Transfer via B.I.C./Butembo

Year	Incoming transfer in US \$	Outgoing transfer in US \$
1998	903,723.44	350,376
1999	3,073,430.98	2,901,683.66
2000	9,973,263.96	11,099,811.35
2001	16,012,323.86	18,277,130.35
2003	8,440, 236.15	23,004,647.17

Source: B.I.C., Butembo; and Mirembe, *op.cit.*, p.168

The incoming transfers are usually related to traders' export revenues, as well as subsidies received by international NGOs operating in the region. The B.I.C. transfers almost a million dollars monthly to the various destinations where traders conduct their import business (Transfers are made directly to brokers' accounts). B.I.C. is under the supervision of an agent of the British Barclays International Bank, located in Nairobi and Kampala. Since 2003, Western Union has also operated in Butembo and similarly deals with the transfer of foreign currency. Nonetheless, only 10 per cent of foreign currency transfers use bank circuits. The rest is done outside the banks, in gold or in cash. Traders channel these non-bank transfers.

The buyers of Nande products in Uganda were Indo-Pakistanis who controlled 80 per cent of the capital as late as 1971 (Glen 1977). As with the Greeks and the Belgian-Congo, Indo-Pakistanis controlled most commercial businesses in the British colonies of East Africa. Traders bought merchandise in Uganda to sell in Congo markets in order to get the Congolese currency to buy more coffee and other items for export. According to informants, products from Uganda, especially textiles, were cheaper than what was sold on the black market in Butembo by Greeks. The latter abandoned the region because of the rebellions in the 1960s, and then the nationalisation in 1974. Local traders continued the business left by the Greeks. In Butembo, products from Kisoro were sold in shops, in the markets, or on the street. This was the beginning of a proliferation of very diverse items called "stocks", at the central market. By the 1970s, things were sold only at the market. Traders in Butembo had business relationships with people at Rutshuru and in Uganda which made business possible. Established traders would sponsor others as junior partners. The pioneers of this circuit opened shops and later whole arcades, and are among the most important businessmen in Butembo today. With insecurity and war in Uganda at the end of 1970s and the early 1980s, however, the circuit had to be abandoned.

Parallel to cross-border trading activities, some traders were involved in regional trade. Those who made enough money with the business of coffee in Uganda were able to buy trucks or vans for the transport of merchandise from Kivus to the Oriental Province, replacing their Greek predecessors. Some traders made the transportation of both people and merchandise a focal point of investment. In the highlands, peasants had developed cash crop market. This specialisation was the heart of exchange with the Oriental Province. After Independence, and through the 1970s and 1980s, vegetables, potatoes, and beans were shipped from Butembo to Kisangani, Isiro, Bunia and other cities. This regional trade constituted one of the sources of an important local accumulation. Regional trading activities progressed quickly, partly because of the insecurity in Uganda where Idi Amin's government had decided to drive out Indo-Pakistanis. Infrastructure was still relatively good at that time in the Congo, and after years

of rebellion in the 1960s, the Oriental Province had become accessible again to products from the Kivus. Nande traders also explored other routes for trade beyond Uganda, including the Sudan and Kenya. These trade routes made it possible for Nande trust networks to proliferate over time.

Trade on the Sudan Border and the Kenyan Networks

Around 1976, an important informal market was opened at Base, 600km northeast of Butembo on the border between the Congo, Uganda and Sudan. People from all three countries were active in this market. Congolese (among them many traders from Butembo) were exchanging coffee and ivory for cars, motorcycles, and trucks from Sudan.

Vwakyanakazi (1982) describe the exchanges thus:

- 1 Yamaha motorcycle = 10 kg of ivory = 20 tola¹⁰ of gold = 1 tonne of coffee;
- 1 van = 100 kg of ivory = 200 tola of gold = 10 tonnes of coffee;
- 1 Mercedes = 400kg of ivory = 800 tola of gold = 40 tonnes of coffee.

Wars in Uganda and in southern Sudan were among the reasons this trade ended. Some traders then went to Kenya. In the 1980s the Kenyan circuit developed quickly. First, there was a large movement of people to Kenya – some people went there under the patronage of missionaries, for medical purposes, or on exploratory business trips. Kenya had some industries and manufacturers; items imported from Kenya were diverse and cheap. When the insecurity in Uganda made business difficult, Nande traders went to Kenya, which was, at that time, peaceful and prosperous.

Furthermore, Nande traders who were travelling to Uganda found out that their Ugandan counterparts bought things from Kenya. During this period, much of the merchandise in Nande shops was coming from Kenya. During the same period, Nande traders who were generally uneducated started learning English for their business in East Africa. From their contacts with Indo-Pakistanis in Kenya, they discovered that it was also possible to export gold to Kenya. In fact, in 1983 the Mobutu government in the Congo liberalised the exploitation of precious minerals such as gold, diamonds, etc. Many shops were opened in Butembo to buy gold. These shops were connected to businessmen who were buying gold for export. As they desired to expand gold acquisitions, Nande traders opened businesses in the Oriental Province, especially in Ituri. In these shops, manufactured items were either exchanged for gold or sold in Congolese currency, which was immediately used to buy gold. Since the Congolese national currency was very unstable and the US dollar was the preferred currency for business, gold came to serve as an alternative currency to conserve value, functioning as either money or merchandise.

Smugglers were moving ivory and gold, hidden in their cars, from the Congo to Kenya. While the exportation of gold was unofficial, the import of manufactured products bought with the money from the gold trade was official. Interested in Congolese products, Kenyan entrepreneurs put in place a kind of barter system; gold was exchanged for merchandise. Butembo then played the role of distributing imported items such as clothes, pharmaceutical products, construction materials, plastic articles, furnishes, dishes, etc., to other regions of the Congo. Indeed, with the departure of the Greeks, other provinces became increasingly dependent on Butembo for manufactured products. Many Nande expanded their business thanks to this East African circuit. It was one of the major sources of local profit until the mid-1980s.

In the beginning, the imported merchandise was shipped to Butembo in trucks belonging to East Africans. But, gradually, Nande traders acquired their own trucks for the international transport of merchandise. For customs service formalities, traders had contacts with Congolese agents who made things easy for them. Thus, night trips on unsafe roads were abandoned. Traders relied on their networks to negotiate and facilitate their business. During this period, in the 1970s and 1980s, the national economy of the Congo was already sinking into crisis. The payment of public servants' salaries was perennially delayed and many of them availed themselves of opportunities for compensation through corruption. Nande traders who were not on the state payroll capitalised on the long distance trade through multiple circuits including the Bujumbura ones.

The Bujumbura Circuits

Although the Mobutu government liberalised the artisanal exploitation of gold in 1993, only official counters authorised by the central bank were allowed to buy gold, diamonds, or other minerals. In 1992, however, the Burundian government opened a tax-free zone, with attractive measures of tax exoneration for precious minerals such as gold. Many foreign buyers of gold settled in Bujumbura. Most were Indo-Pakistanis, Lebanese, and West Africans, but also some Europeans (Bredeloup 1995). The Belgian company, AFFIMET (Affinage des Metaux) set up operations in Bujumbura in December 1992 with the goal of producing, treating and exporting gold in fine bars. The manager of this company was simply known as Alain.¹¹ The presence of these counters on the Burundi border was very helpful for Nande businessmen. From the end of 1980s into the 1990s, many traders exported gold to Bujumbura (even prior to the creation of the tax-exempt zone) in order to avoid an insecure Uganda in the wake of the Museveni revolution. Alain became their main client in Bujumbura because he was perceived to be trustworthy by some traders. Alain also helped Nande traders transfer their dollars into bank accounts overseas. He gave them a

small receipt to prove that he had sent the fax for the transfer. Traders could then use their money to buy manufactured goods overseas. He played the role of financial and commercial intermediary. Sometimes, he helped traders to buy trucks or cars in exchange for gold. For traders from Butembo, operations in Burundi also had the advantage of being closer to home.

The Burundian or Rwandan markets for gold were preferred to “counters” in the Congo because prices there were twice that proposed in the Congo. In 1988, while the official annual production of gold in the Congo was 1364kg, the Bujumbura “counters” received seven to eight times more gold. Yet, Burundi is not a gold producing country. It was publicly known that the gold sold in Burundi was coming from the Kivu (Sumata 2001). As Emizet Kisangani wrote:

In 1982, Belgian gold imports from Burundi represented 400 kilograms of gold compared with 6 kilograms of Burundi's production in the same year. Two years later, gold exports from Burundi were more than half of Congolese exports. Since 1985, Burundi has been exporting more gold to Belgium than Congo, which is the major producer of gold in Central Africa... the increase in Burundi's gold exports can only be attributed to smuggling from eastern part of Congo, especially from the Kivu area (Kisangani 2000:12).

Insecurity in Burundi caused the departure of the foreign gold dealers from the country. Some of them went to Uganda, which had become stable. Nande traders also returned to Uganda for business. Kampala has since remained a regional centre of transit, both for people and for imported and exported merchandise. The use of Ugandan infrastructures like the airport and good road networks was a strategy the Nande exploited to maintain their commercial activities. Kampala was a centre for transit to other parts of the world including Dubai, Taipei, Jakarta or Gouazoug. Thus, the Nande turned away from colonial metropolitan centres of accumulation in Europe to favour Asian routes and their business opportunities.

The Asian Route

Since the 1980s and 1990s, the local economy in the Kivus has used US dollars as the currency of business, which made it easier for Nande traders to expand their operations transnationally. Nande traders discovered Asian markets in Dubai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, and Jakarta. The pioneers of these markets originally received crucial information from their Indo-Pakistani friends in Kenya, who commonly had business links to the Gulf countries (More than a half of the population of Dubai, for instance, is of Indian or Pakistani origin) (Hirst, 2001). Some local micro-entrepreneurs had already begun to discover the merchandise's countries of origin from the packing materials of goods bought

in Nairobi; others made exploratory trips to judge the prospects for business, transport, accommodation, and other opportunities for profit. Upon their return to Butembo, they brought items to sell on the local market as a test. From this preliminary experiment, they judged and evaluated the profit margins. When the results of the test were conclusively positive, which was often the case, they resumed these operations, and soon shared the information with other members of their networks.

Traders who first went to Asia were looking for cheap textiles. They imported clothes from Shanghai, Hong Kong, Thailand and Taiwan. As a result, the first wave of Asian imports was essentially constituted of textiles. If the production of textiles had become secondary in the 1990s in the South Korea and Singapore industrial landscapes, it remained important in terms of exports and comparative advantage in Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia and China (Bouteiller and Fouquin 1995). One of the traders initially had a virtual monopoly on cheap textile imports (from 1988 to 1989) because he concealed the information from others about where he was buying them. He even had some of the clothes he was selling – especially women's imprint fashions - named after him. These women's clothes were called "*Kadebe*" (his nickname). He also sold his textiles in other regions of the Congo to such an extent that the Congolese textile industry could not withstand the competition, and effectively collapsed. So, the traders turned to Hong Kong for easy access due to its liberal visa formalities.

Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), was also attractive to Nande traders and other Congolese businessmen partly because of its easy access in terms of visa formalities and because of its tax-free stance. Dubai is also not very far – a 5 or 6-hour flight - from Entebbe, Uganda. Merchandise could be brought to Kampala by cargo planes, which is not possible from Hong Kong due to the greater distance. Visas to the U.A.E. are easy to obtain, even from travel agencies in Kampala. In fact, the Gulf Air Office delivers visas for business in Dubai.

Dubai is essentially a globalised market; it is practically a warehouse emirate, prosperous and secure. Many items come from various parts of the world, especially from Southeast Asia. In Dubai, African traders were presented with the possibility of visiting numerous shops in order to make their selections and they could buy different commodities such as cosmetics, household electrical appliances, clothes, and electronic devices. According to Roland Marshal (2000), East African businessmen turned to Dubai for three reasons: internal deregulation, increasing competition of products coming from Asia via Dubai which are cheaper than what is offered locally in Africa; and finally, the rise of informal economic activities that facilitate the building of transnational networks. Marshal explains that Dubai trade involves Indo-Pakistanis and Yemeni merchants with very organised networks linking them to India, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Africa. It also involves Africans

who rely mostly on family networks. African traders find other Africans in Dubai who speak Arabic and English, and who serve as intermediaries to help them obtain visas, find accommodations and identify the products they want to buy. This is the advantage of operating in Dubai.

Since the 1990s, Jakarta has also been one of the destinations of Nande traders. According to some, prices in Jakarta are even cheaper for some items, and visas are not difficult to obtain. However, a conjectural element needs to be taken into account here. With the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998, the Indonesian Rupee depreciated relative to the US dollar, which made Indonesian exports for someone with US dollars much cheaper. African traders, with US dollars or gold were buying their merchandise very cheaply in Indonesia during this time. Before making a trip to Asia, Nande traders routinely searched for information about cargo freight agencies' price and about the possibilities and conditions of transport to Africa. They also sought information about commercial intermediaries. Over the last five years, traders from Butembo have even established permanent representatives in some Asian cities, such as Jakarta, Gouagzoung, and Hong Kong.

For local traders, business with Asia seems much easier than with Europe where visa formalities usually become a nightmare. One has to have a bank account and make payments through banks. Moreover, items from Europe are of very high quality and expensive, and therefore are difficult to sell. Southeast Asia offers much cheaper products, thanks to lower production costs. Furthermore, Nande traders generally deal with family enterprises controlled either by Indo-Pakistani or Chinese diasporic networks operating across various locales throughout Asia. These enterprises work much like the Nande businesses, with a strong emphasis on personalised relationships, trust and flexibility.

The importance of merchandise arriving weekly into Butembo points to the level of local accumulation. In 1995, some traders were already able to import dozens of containers of textiles from Hong Kong. One container usually has the capacity of carrying merchandise with a value of approximately US\$80,000. Today, the largest importers bring 10 to 15 containers monthly. One should bear in mind that while meaningful economic figures were difficult to come by in 1995, the year before the war, Zaire had more than 200 per cent hyperinflation, the largest government deficit ever, and plunging mineral production made the country very poor (see CIA World Factbook).¹² In comparison to the national statistics, Nande traders were faring much better, sociologically and economically, than the rest of the country.

Thus, in the 1980s some traders started going to Nairobi to buy items from Indians in order to sell them in Butembo and the surrounding cities. When they realised that items bought from Indians in Nairobi were actually coming from

Dubai, Nande traders started going to Dubai. By the end of the 1990s, they had discovered routes to Hong Kong, Taipei, Jakarta and Malaysia. They went there with US dollars and returned with large shipments of various commodities including clothes, motorcycles, automobiles, shoes, etc. to sell in Butembo.

There has been a profound reorientation away from the metropolis of colonial modernity to newer sites of contemporary capital accumulation. The African economy is being deeply reconfigured in relation to the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia. The port of Mombassa in Kenya is used to bring back items from all over the world. From Mombassa, trucks carry containers through Kenya and Uganda. At Kasindi, where the customs services are located, traders regularly bribe customs service agents, and generally pay duties for only half of their merchandise. There is a well-known practice called “*denaturer le produit*”, which literally means to change the nature of the product. A trader who imports vehicles in a container with some blankets will declare that he has a container of blankets that cost three times less than a container with vehicles. Indeed, the customs service agent is not stupid; he knows that the declaration is not accurate, but he will accept it in order to receive his bribe whose value is proportional to the real nature of the product. These practices benefit petty traders because they will need to sell cheaply enough to make some margin of profit. If they had to pay the full amount of customs duty, the price on the market would be higher and the risk of losing would be higher, too.¹³

It is important to also note that new means of communication has made the transaction cost cheaper since 2004. The DRC has seen its telecommunication space invaded by three major cell phone companies, the South African Vodacom, the French Celtel and the Chinese CCT (Congo-Chine Telecommunication network). Today, traders in Butembo take advantage of these means of communication to order or re-order products or conceal orders from overseas. Telecommunication together with the creation of airlines companies in Butembo compensate for the lack of good roads, so the Nande can maintain and consolidate their trading networks.

Airline Companies and Communication Networks

In the 1990s, because of the poor conditions of roads, Nande traders started renting Russian-made Antonov planes from the Ukrainian company *Urga* to fly merchandise to various places where they could sell them. Most of these planes had Ukrainian crews. The rent was paid monthly through international transfers. In 2005, Butembo had five airlines in operation: Air Graben, Cetraca Air Service (CAS), Air Boyoma, Uhuru Airlines, Butembo Airlines. Cargos would take off from Beni Airport. Merchandise bought in Butembo was transported in trucks

to Beni, and from Beni the cargos were flown to Kisangani, Bunia, Isiro, Goma, and other destinations. The average total freight leaving Beni every month ranged from 150 to 400 tonnes.

In the far west of the DRC, Butembo is located 2000 km from the main port of Matadi on the Atlantic Ocean. The Beni-Kisangani road has been completely neglected. On the east side, the port of Mombasa, in the Indian Ocean, is 1,700 km away, accessible by a paved road through Uganda and Kenya. The nearest 'big' airports are 250 km away in Bunia, and 350 km away in Goma. Since Independence, the Kivu region was marginalised in terms of the post-colonial states's modernisation and development of infrastructure (Macgaffey 1987; *Bureau d'études, d'aménagement et d'urbanisme, Office de planification et de développement du Québec* 1992). Investment in infrastructure was concentrated in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and Kisangani. Neglected roads suppressed development of North Kivu. Discussing the disarticulation of the national economy, Mbogha notes:

The Congo has opted for industrial development. Its planning is around these economic poles: Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and Kisangani [...] the temptation is to smuggle things through Rwanda and Uganda in order to find ways to survive. In fact, the economy of the region is oriented externally rather than internally (1975:57).

The quest for markets was one of the critical reasons businessmen in Butembo turned to East Africa. The so-called "Northern Corridor" is much more accessible and offers many communication opportunities such as ports and airports, and connected concrete roads. There are also many commercial and industrial centres and the possibility of connecting with other parts of the world from international airports in Kampala or Bujumbura. Today, Uganda is the main country of transit for Butembo traders. According to the Ugandan migration police in Mbondwe, a city on the Congolese border, at least 50 Congolese enter Uganda for business transactions on a daily basis (Mirembe 2005). From Kampala, Nande traders obtain visas for other destinations: Hong Kong, Bangkok, Lagos, Jakarta, Dubai, Johannesburg, Mumbai, etc. Merchandise generally arrives at the Mombassa port, in Kenya. It is transported on roads to the Congo via Uganda. Merchandise to Congo is escorted by Kenyan and then Ugandan customs police until it reaches the borders of the Congo. This is to deter robbery and to ensure that the merchandise does not enter the Kenyan or the Ugandan markets without clearance through customs. Kasindi is the main border entry point for merchandise into North-eastern Congo. These merchandises are then shipped into the Congo's more remote interior regions. Nande traders link South Asia and the Persian Gulf to the far remote villages of the eastern Congo. This context poses new challenges and new opportunities as well.

Trading During War

The consequences of civil war were tremendous in the Eastern Congo and are still felt today in various domains. In 1996, a rebellion against the Mobutu regime started in the Eastern Congo with the help of the Ugandan and Rwandan national armies. In May 2007, Laurent Desire Kabila took power at the national level after a year-long military campaign from East to West. Nande traders were obliged to contribute financially to rebel efforts. After three decades of Mobutu's dictatorship, people throughout the Congo expected major changes in the management of the country. But, deep disillusionment followed almost immediately, because under Kabila's regimes (1997-2001), and especially after the second outbreak of the rebellion in 1998, civil servants were no longer paid. The new Congolese currency introduced in 1998 was received with enthusiasm by traders, but taxes and custom fees increased and business became very difficult.

The second rebellion in 1998 was initiated by the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD), a group backed by Rwanda and Uganda. This rebellion contested Kabila's management of the country. But, it soon became clear that Rwandans and Ugandans did not share the same agenda for the Congo. Hence, the RCD split into two groups, RCD/Goma, backed by Rwanda, and RCD/Kisangani, backed by Uganda. The latter was in charge of the Beni-Lubero territories until 2002. During the 1998, resistance against the Rwandan army was led by *May-May* armed groups. Opposing *May-May* groups became a major source of insecurity and resulted in a proliferation of small armies and light weapons in the region. It is in this context of war and insecurity that mineral entrepreneurs and speculators emerged who were linked to the Rwandan and Ugandan rebels. Counters were installed in Butembo and gold was sold to intermediaries who exported minerals to Uganda from North Kivu and the Oriental Province. Coltan was well-known and widely exploited between 1998 and 2001.¹⁴ At this time, a new wealthy elite, who were associated with the exploitation of coltan, emerged.

During military occupation by Ugandan military, Ugandan business networks were extended to Congo territories in northern Kivu (Calas 2001:155). Ugandan soft drinks were available on the Congolese market between 1996 and 1998. Ugandan shillings circulated as currency on the Congolese side of the border in 1997. Some Ugandans found collaborators in the Congo and managed to stockpile oil and cement in villages close to the borders. These people successfully exploited timber, gold, diamonds and coltan and imported oil without paying customs fees because they were linked to the politico-military authorities of the rebellion. Gerard Prunier contends that the Ugandan presence in the Congo was limited to profiteering by businessmen and did not truly affect local Congolese (Prunier 1997:52). This analysis flagrantly disregards the climate of insecurity instigated by the Ugandan occupation and indeed the severe restriction of freedoms for the local populations of eastern Congo (Malonga 2002).

Administratively, rebels substituted themselves for the central state. In the conquered territories, they exercised political power and conducted all the affairs of administration: taxes, customs services, police, army, judiciary, etc. The rebels also assumed the management of public enterprises such as tax collection. For revenue, rebels raised taxes, but their management of public space was not different from the past (Tull 2003). Civil servants were not paid. Infrastructure was not renewed. The rebel administrations were installed to serve their political and military leaders and not for the general interest of the local populations. The state was effectively privatised in the occupied territories (Asango 2004). The rebels simply continued the patron-client mode of governing that had existed during the Mobutu period.

The territories of Beni and Lubero were controlled by RDC/K.M.L., whose leader Mbusa Nyamuisi was a Nande from Beni. He allowed some Nande traders to evade customs duties and encouraged informal practices. In return, he received a great deal of material support from Nande traders, in terms of feeding and clothing the rebels, housing their leaders, and personal gifts to rebel leaders. Notably, in the Nande region, the rebels never captured economic power from the traders¹⁵ because their networks were too solid to be dismantled. On the contrary, some traders pre-financed the rebels' activities; traders would invite the rebels to use their hotels and guesthouses and in return would negotiate to have their bills paid in the form of tax exoneration and customs fees exemptions. In fact, traders overbilled the rebels and benefited by free import and export business, which was allowed to continue, relatively unimpeded, by the military situation.

It is important to note that the rebel groups that occupied this part of the country had no resources whatsoever. They needed money to finance their military activities against the government. Traders offered pre-financing arrangements to the rebels because the system seemed very profitable to them. Notably, this system favoured only very big traders who were able to lend the rebel administrations large amounts of money. Indeed, no one could ensure how the traders would get their money back, but both traders and rebel leaders benefited from these accords, as the panel of UN experts on the illegal exploitation of resources of the DRC states:

Local commercial operators are, however, required to pay substantial import and export duties. These operations may be favoured with discounted tax payment deals, in the form of pre-financing arrangements, but tax payment for local operators is mandatory. Pre-financing arrangements involve the payment by an importer of discounted tax, payments in exchange for a financial payment to an authorising rebel politician or administrator. None of these payments to the rebel administration is used to finance public services.¹⁶

These arrangements between individual rebel leaders and traders were put into place to generate income by taxation and custom fees. A small portion of the largest traders and rebel leaders benefited from these practices at a cost to the local populations of the surrounding regions. As far as trade activities were concerned, the context of insecurity and fragmented sovereignty caused by war and rebellion had badly affected some circuits of distribution, especially the inter-regional Congolese circuits. Merchandise could not move across territories controlled by rival rebel factions; when it was, customs fees had to be paid, despite the fact that goods were not moving across any official state borders. Merchandise moving from Butembo to Goma, for example, was subject to customs fees. Confronted with the new situation, Nande traders used Russian-made Antonov cargo planes to connect cities, and smaller traders would even use bicycles to transport merchandise from one region to another. During the war, imports were 20 to 49 per cent lower than before (in 1994-1995, for instance). Many traders acknowledge that their profit margins were very low during this period, and they worked largely to keep their activities alive.

During this period, the prices of items on the local market declined because the stock could not be sold in other regions. In general, the rebellion destroyed the structure of most Nande businesses by severing networks' connections to their clients. Capital was immobilised or invested into houses. Indeed, construction in concrete accelerated during this period. It was a tactic for adapting to the new context. Thus, a small group of traders benefited from the high price of coltan and from politico-military sponsorship, but, in general, the war was very bad for trade in Butembo.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the origins of Nande trust networks, the strategies used by the traders to maintain a certain level of success despite numerous obstacles ranging from the dangers of travel for the salt trade, to restrictions and prohibitions under the colonial regime, and civil wars in neighbouring countries and finally in the Congo itself. The study has described the framework Nande people have used over time to work the economy in their favour despite the obstacles. Different routes and markets along which Nande traders have constructed and consolidated their trading networks are described. The origins of Nande trust network have been considered from the perspective of an emergence of the Protestant work ethic, which Max Weber famously considered as the basis of capitalist development in Europe. Nande traders did indeed learn from their Baptist missionaries the spirit of saving and free enterprise that considerably facilitated their initial economic development. However, the Protestant associations supplied more than a mere ethos: strong social ties consolidated a close circle of business partnerships routed in the security of

interpersonal trust. This friendship was extended to middlemen in each stage of the trade. The political turmoil of Zaire in the 1960s and 1970s and the economic mismanagement of the 1970s and 1980s ultimately gave the Nande trust network its outlook and structure. Colonial and post-colonial retail trade gave rise to the emergence of commercial middlemen. Today, the story of Nande economic success has unfolded amidst the civil war and the disintegration of the central government.

The argument is that in the absence of strong central government and in the presence of violent contenders for power, Nande trading networks have protected a self-sustaining and prosperous economic enterprise. This is made possible by the specific social formation Nande have constructed by mobilising their ethnicity and kinship beyond blood relations. The production of economic goods such as coffee and gold and the production of non economic goods such as quasi-family relations with Arabs in Dubai and Chinese in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Guangzhou and Indonesians in Jakarta, have made their community dynamic and given traders the status of power brokers in the region. The success of the Nande entrepreneurial elite in Butembo calls for a critical departure from the excessive fetishisation¹⁷ of the centrality of state power on account of the ascendancy of an effectively global, neo-imperial sovereignty.¹⁸ The import-export capacities of the Nande trading network beg for more attention to the pluralities of governance within a dynamic reality of statehood. Indeed, the absence of government does not necessarily mean the absence of governance. But, as Tilly notes,

The history record suggests that where government collapses, other predators spring up. In the absence of effective governmental power, people who control substantial concentration of capital, coercion, or commitment generally use them to forward their own ends, thus creating new forms of oppression and inequality (Tilly 2006:24).

Nande traders seem to have captured the extractive power of the region. As the new powerbrokers, they are now forcing their way into capturing the social surplus. This move is indeed challenged by the customary elite as well as the intellectual elite. The role of ethnicity in the economic dynamism of the Nande traders should be explored.

Notes

1. For this narration, I rely very much on Jack Nelson's *Christian Missionising and Social Transformation: A History of Conflict and Change in Eastern Zaire*, New York – Praeger, 1992. A testimony of Paul Frederick Hurlburt, the son of Paul Hurlburt, the pioneer of Baptist mission in Katwa, can be found on the following webpage: www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/GUIDES/438.htm
2. He fell from a three store house and broke his hip and legs.

3. The Eastern Congo was among the principal coffee producing zones in the country.
4. *Republique du Zaïre, Conjuncture économique*, Département de l'Economie Nationale, Industrie et Commerce extérieur, 1985, p. 41.
5. Dry gold is also known as alluvial gold. This part of the study borrows a lot from the work Dan Fahey did on gold mining in Mungwalu region, which is intimately linked to the Butembo market.
6. The merchandise is later divided between different market shops.
7. This can also be said of Nande traders in general in relation to the war in North Kivu. All the rebels in the eastern DRC are selling gold, cassiterite, wolfram, and sometimes coltan to Nande traders in exchange for cash or weapons. I will come back to this question in a later chapter.
8. My interview in Butembo with Dr Kisoni revealed significant information.
9. In 2002, the bank fees for the transfer varied between 0.6 % and 1% for outgoing money, and between 1.5% and 2.5 % for incoming money.
10. Tola is a traditional measure of gold and the equivalence is: one Tola is equal to 9.5 kitcheles (11.4 g).
11. This Belgian Company had a legal problem with the Burundian government, which contended that the company was not eligible to benefit the free tax zone for mineral exploitation from 1995 to 1998. The Burundian government eventually won the case at the International Centre for Conflict Related to Investments.
12. In 1995, the GDP was estimated at \$21 billion, the national growth rate was -6 %, the national product per capita, \$500, and the inflation rate was 35%-40% (1995 CIA Factbook).
13. Explanations given by J.L. Kasindivuko.
14. Kennes E., "Le secteur minier au Congo: 'deconnexion' et descente aux enfers", Reyntjens F. and Marysse S., *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Annuaire 1999-2000*, Paris Harmattan, 2000, pp. 299-342; Braeckman C., "Les richesses minières du Congo financent la guerre", *Journal Le Soir*, February 5, 1999; "Les minerais du Kivu sont le nerf de la guerre", *Journal Le Soir* of May 9, 2000.
15. Raeymaekers T. op.cit. pp 66-68.
16. United Nations, Final Report of the panel of experts of the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2002.
17. Criticising with a Feuerbachian edge those who consider the state as the defining horizon for the analysis of power and sovereignty, and the state as the necessary intermediary in regulating the relations between citizens, Marx wrote: "Just as Christ is the intermediary to whom man attributes all his own divinity and all his religious bonds, so the state is the intermediary to which man confides all his non-divinity and all his human freedom" (Marx, *The Jews Question*, p. 32).
18. As De Genova (2007) argues, the discourse about power and sovereignty has proliferated among scholars in recent years, but in a manner that seldom does more than recapitulate (and thereby, fetishise yet again) the fetishisation of power as synonymous with domination and sovereignty as an exclusive preserve of the state.

6

Playing the Ethnic Card in the Formation of a Postcolonial African State

This chapter will attempt to answer a number of key questions: How does ethnicity play out among the Nande and to what extent can it be considered an explanatory variable for the current social and economic order in the region? What is it about the Nande social organisation that makes this order possible? This is not about the cultural genius of the Nande, but rather the specificities of the socio-political history that makes them Nande and contributes to the reification of that collective identity as a new ethnicity. Finally, how does this history in the context of DRC's particular conflict, (re-)constitute Nande notions of identity, while relegating its sense of national belonging within the DRC state?

The chapter will proceed in three sections. The first, is a theoretical discussion of what I call the “postcolonial life of ethnic differences”. The discussion here will not only focus on the critical idea of how ethnicity evolved, but will also show how contemporary political economy makes it a necessary source of understanding. One cannot understand the current Nande trade networking without grappling with the question of “Nande-ness.” The second demonstrates the extent to which it is possible to account for the Nande traders' transnational networking and its impact on local community, power, sovereignty, etc., in Butembo and its hinterlands. In other words, the questions to be answered are: how and to what extent does ethnicity matter to the Nande people? The third section shows how inter-ethnic relations are surprisingly very peaceful and important for Nande traders, even though the intra-ethnic relations in Butembo resemble a rat race where competition between traders inside the space of dependency (Butembo and its hinterland) is, at times, extremely fierce and pitiless. This section will also show that because of the fierce intra-ethnic competitions among the Nande, some community members have been able to reach out

beyond the original spatial, economic, and mental boundaries of their group. This shift is at the base of the Nande economic or even political survival, and it shows that kinship is problematically to blood relations.

The overall aim of this chapter is to show that all the money-making among Nande traders takes Nande consciousness as one of its central concerns. But, what does it mean to be a Nande? This study characterises the Nande network as a trust network, meaning that these are networks with trust as its constitutive element, but there is another element of cohesion: ethnic belonging. The chapter provides further theorisation of and relationships between themes such as networks, trust, etc., in terms of the nexus of kinship, shared place of origin, shared religion, and shared language to a reproduction and reinvigoration of the salience of Nande ethnicity. In other words, the chapter will use the detailed empirical discussion of the Nande trade networks provided in the previous chapter to synthesise a theory of ethnicity and trust networks together. Again, the intended subject is not “the Nande” as a naturalised ethnic group, but rather the historically specific social formation that Nande traders have produced and organised around the reconfiguration and mobilisation of kinship and ethnic ideologies, as well as practices of “Nande-ness” – an ensemble of social relations, in which human productive powers and creative capacities are paramount.

Ethnicity Revisited

The existence of African Studies as a subject of academic interest is a relatively recent phenomenon. The study of the African continent, specifically the sub-Saharan region of the continent, by scholars from all corners of the globe has evolved quite rapidly, especially with the enormous span of political change occurring over the past 150 years. Most Western scholars can only analyse topics of interest concerning Africa from an outside perspective, and the participation of African scholars is an even more recent addition to this area of focus, developing during the post-colonial period. The Western, external understanding of Africa and the multitude of cultures found there have evolved and changed continuously since the beginning of African Studies. Largely predicated upon an uncritical presupposition of ontological differences in culture between “Western” and “Eastern” societies, as Edward Said (1979) has demonstrated, ethnicity has been defined in terms of the ways that social groups are understood in terms of difference. In other words, ethnicity has acquired much attention and many different, if sometimes conflicting points of view, from a variety of academic scholars. This section of the chapter aims to analyse the evolution of ethnicity as an area of academic study, examining the changes in the debate surrounding the term over time and through different socio-political climates.

Debates Around Ethnicity

The definition of ethnicity with reference to African societies and cultures, and what it might mean in terms of the state or the nation is a contested subject in the literature of African Studies. The first debate on ethnicity, which took shape in the period of decolonisation, depict it as a primordial characteristic, allowing for people to be grouped together by a combination of historical, linguistic, and ostensibly biological roots. Most scholars refuted this conception of ethnicity during the course of the late twentieth century (Calhoun 1993:227). The idea that ethnicity was a pre-existing feature led to the somewhat archaic rhetoric that characterised African tribes as exotic and naturalised tribalism, terminologies that have not entirely died out but which are largely avoided in contemporary academic discourse. Primordialism also assigns a more or less fixed and enduring identity to a group of people, leaving little or no option than to presume that people will invariably act politically, socially and culturally based on these shared identities (Clark 1995:352). The crystallising idea of a primordial or pre-existing ethnicity defining a people not with respect to their modern-day place in the world, but by their blood lines and ancient roots slowly gave way to a constructivist or instrumentalist point of view, which was largely developed in the seventies and eighties during periods of rapid political change, struggles for nationalism, and the creation of strong nation-states (Clark 1995:352; Calhoun 1993:229). As a concept, therefore, primordialism was not necessarily refuted or repudiated with the onset of constructivist theories; rather, it was eclipsed as an explanatory device and became a secondary and relatively understated way of viewing and understanding the ethnic differences attributed to ostensible groups.

Brubaker and Cooper argue that a constructivist view of identity (a term in which these revised notions of ethnicity are very much implicated) leaves little room for discussing what identity or ethnicity is (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:1). The constructivist school of thought considers ethnicity as a fluid concept rather than a concrete unchanging one that was created and manipulated by political entities, such as colonising powers or social and economic actors who are external to the ethnic group in question. Crawford Young (1982) highlights a trend in the 1950s in which ethnicity was first viewed as an important political factor during the period of decolonisation, especially with regard to political allegiances and the political power that the support of different ethnic groups could bring. He also opposes this, however, with the seemingly contradictory trend during the 1960s of denying ethnicity any true sociological legitimacy as a reality of African culture. As Matsanza (2007) points out, ethnicity no longer has the same construction it did during the pre-colonial era, and the fluidity of a so-called ethnic identity has been widely recognised. Yet, the push and pull of these two trends have not disappeared over the course of time; if anything, scholars have tried relentlessly to reconcile the theories coming from these disparate perspectives,

but the debate persists. Analysing the role of ethnicity in African culture and politics, as well as its implications for the international community, is a persistent and popular exercise in African Studies and in media reporting on African affairs.

The current debate surrounding this topic leaves a rather nebulous idea of ethnicity and its national or international significations. Scholars have not completely abandoned the idea of primordial ethnic identities, however. Beyond the era dominated by a mostly constructivist approach to the question, championed mainly during the 1980s but present in most academic discussions of ethnicity, theories and approaches have melded together with no specific school of thought emerging as the dominant one. Ethnic definitions and boundaries continue to be salient, especially with their drastic changes to the Post-Cold War geopolitical map over the past two decades. The increasing importance given to ethnicity on a political level during the post-colonial period has also played a huge role in the way ethnicity is seen and how it is defined in academic discourse.

In the wake of World War II, the rhetoric of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasised individual rights with the final goal of nation (state) building, which eliminated most mention of national minorities, including ethnic groups, except to the extent that geopolitical boundaries might best be redrawn to assign each presumed nation its proper territory and state. Ethnicity and ethnic identities were, therefore, seen as an obstacle to the creation of a durable state (based on national identities). By the early 1990s, with the end of the Cold War and the subsequent democratisation of most African states, individual and group identities were brought more intensely into the forefront with greater attention being paid to separate ethnicities demanding specific rights at the state level (Mirzeler 2002:113). In the Congo, for example, there are almost 200 officially recognised ethnic groups. These groups have been formed and reformed over the years from the fusions of two or more ethnicities or by the fracturing of one ethnicity into several (Matsanza 2007:2). Although certain ethnic groups may have their roots in what might have previously been considered primordial identity groupings, the abundant evidence of the evolution and transition of ethnicity allows a constructivist point of view to have equal if not greater importance in these discussions. To further complicate the matter, the ethnographer Alan Merriam (2003), who reduced the multitude of ethnicities in the Congo to seven major ethnic categories, has contributed to the conflation of these large groupings with the established political alliances (Clark 1995:355).

In the early years of independence, leaders vying for political power relied on the support of the largely ethnicised Native Authorities present in the Congo, who were an important majority of the population (Mamdani 1999:54). As Mamdani points out, much ethnic identity today still derives its frame of reference from the practices of the colonial government. The fractures and redefinitions of several ethnic groups during the colonial era were exacerbated by Belgian

colonial power, crystallising in a politicised definition of what it meant to belong to each individual group. The Belgian presence in the Congo created what Mamdani refers to as a “bifurcated citizenship” – one racial and one ethnic (Mamdani 1999:55). An ethnic identity was given to the indigenous people, while a racial identity was assigned to the non-indigenous populations. This also created an inconsistency in the rights of different groups of people with emphasis placed on ethnic association rather than national citizenship. The colonial state often established “federations of tribes” to its own advantage, creating a group of people loosely organised around a shared ethnicity for political, social or economic purposes (Clark 1995:353). The lasting effects of these practices have created “ethnic” rifts in some African countries, and have moulded modern-day politics in others. In the case of Senegal, for instance, the French presence created an enhanced political role for the Wolof people and relied on them to fill certain governmental positions, which continue today to be positions largely occupied by Senegalese of Wolof ancestry. The reification of identity politics and ethnic group definitions by European colonisers has not, however, occurred altogether independently of autonomous definitions of identity on all levels.

Clark addresses the problem of auto-identification and how people choose to align themselves along national, religious or social lines. This is one of the central topics of interest in a contemporary discourse surrounding ethnicity in Africa. Clark states very aptly, “even if one's primary identification is with an ethnic group... one may not necessarily act politically on that identification [because] mobilization along ethnic lines depends... on the existence of defined ethnic communities [as well as] on the actions of local leaders and the issues at stake” (Clark 1995:354). Crystallisation of putative ethnic and other identities and their use in modern discourses of identity politics is contested at its base by Brubaker and Cooper as potentially unnecessary. They argue that “one does not have to use 'race' (or ethnicity as the case may be) as a category of analysis... to understand and analyse social and political practices oriented to the presumed existence of putative 'races'” (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:5). The notion of ethnicity as a modern-day “invention” demands that we question every process of reification of ethnic identity, and the level on which this process takes place.

Several specific definitions for different classifications of identity, including ethnicity, are recognised by Brubaker and Cooper in order to clarify what is normally an ambiguous concept. According to their analysis, ethnicity can be understood as a basis for political action, as a means for social regrouping or shared consciousness, or as a product of political action, among other things (Brubaker and Cooper 2000:8). This very fluid concept of what identity or ethnicity is aligns itself more easily with the contemporary debate surrounding the subject. They have quite concretely put forth several ideas about the reification of ethnicity while not specifically isolating a single, concrete definition for ethnicity or identity.

This trend is not exclusive to Brubaker and Cooper; most modern scholars on the subject have adopted it as well. As evident in the much more inclusive contemporary debate on ethnicity and identity politics, we can safely conclude that current scholarship on ethnicity has attributed to these terms a much more fluid definition, allowing for the evolution, construction and deconstruction of ethnicity by parties both outside and intimately linked to the ethnic question.

Historical Conceptualisation of Ethnicity

According to Cohen (1978), ethnicity, like “structure” before it, represented a shift during the 1970s toward new theoretical and empirical concerns in anthropology. Ethnicity opened up the question of categorisation by non-members (the objectivist emphasis) as opposed to a person’s own identification with a particular ethnic group (subjectivist emphasis). There was indeed a shift from the anthropological study of isolated tribes (Dinka, Nuer, Azande, Luba, etc...) to one emphasising the interaction between such groups in rural, urban and industrial settings within and between nation-states. Before moving any further let us note that the tribe is a fundamentally colonial concept derived from the Latin *tribus*, referring to barbarians at the borders of empire. The word tribe has since been associated with a dichotomisation of the world’s people into uncivilised and civilised – the raw and cooked of human historical experience (Cohen 1978:384). Furthermore, the depiction of colonised people as tribes was profoundly routed in the denial that they could ever be constituted as nations that might be reasonably expected to develop the capacity to govern themselves.

Frederic Barth (1969), who criticised anthropology for having isolated the ethnic unit conceptually (by creating cultural and social forms seen as relatively isolated outcomes of focal ecological adaptation), noted that ethnicity is not a general or wide-scale identity, but rather, a concept that can be narrowed and broadened in relation to a specific political need. For Barth, ethnicity implies boundaries – their creation, their maintenance, and change (Cohen 1978:386). The creation and maintenance of boundaries, within which members participate according to similar and continuing rules over time, is central to the phenomenon of ethnicity in the Barthian sense.

Following Barth, Cohen underlines the fact that ethnic boundaries are not static and enduring. They are multiple and include overlapping sets of ascribed loyalties that make for multiple identities. He defines ethnicity as a series of nesting dichotomisations of inclusiveness and exclusiveness. It is a descent-based cultural identifier used to assign persons to groupings that expand and contrast in inverse relation to the inclusive and exclusive nature of membership (Cohen 1978:378).

The difference between Cohen’s definition of ethnicity and Barth’s is apparent. Both consider ethnic boundaries as constructed, negotiated and, above all, situational. In this sense, ethnicity is a dependent variable. And what determines

its salience is precisely what defines the field of inter-ethnic relations where boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are defined. Ethnic boundaries have an importance that surpasses the merely practical: they are both political problems and political solutions; they participate in the exercise of power but also undermine power. Boundaries make it possible to actively investigate individuals or organisations that combine and channel individual support for confrontations in which ethnicity is the basis of collective action and antagonism. Rabushka and Shepsle (1972) expand on this idea by suggesting that the quality and the content of leadership is crucial. Political actors, they note, enhance their own positions or desire for leadership by defining conflicts, raising hopes, as well as articulating and expanding fears and frustrations.

Organised ethnic groups can fight for equality in rights or entitlements, or persons within them can seek to leave and become members of more privileged groups. In this sense, ethnicity has been legitimised in political theory, making it a means not only of anti-alienative, diffuse identity, but also a means of asserting one's rights in a political community in which ethnicity is a recognised element. For Williams (1989), "ethnicity labels the visibility of that aspect of identity formation process that is produced by and subordinated to nationalist programs and plans – plans intent on creating putative homogeneity out of heterogeneity through the appropriated process of transformant hegemony" (Williams 1989:439). Williams argues that ethnicity situates the politics of cultural struggle in the nexus of territorial and cultural nationalism that characterises all putatively homogeneous nation-states. Therefore, the process of homogenisation that takes place in the field of culture, by making visible the groups of different cultures, is part of a nationalist ideology, which establishes the homogeneous culture against which all others will be rendered visible – rendered, in other words, as ethnicities or races.

Ethnicity in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa

In the literature related to the Sub-Saharan African, especially in anthropological work, the peoples studied have generally been reduced to tribes or ethnic groups. Consequently, according to this creed, there are in fact no genuine nations in Africa. As Mahmood Mamdani explains:

While the debate on "nations" "nationalities" and "national minorities" within Europe and America was a lively controversy, its flip side was once again a point of consensus. All were agreed that there were no nations amongst colonised peoples; and this was said to be particularly true of the "dark continent". For Africa was said to be the land of "tribes", not nations (1992:12).

Rooted in the colonial period, this creed still colours much of the thinking produced in the post-colonial literature. Adherents of this creed have formed and shaped our prejudice about the African social, economic and political universe. From them we have inherited terms like *tribes*, *Hottentot*, *Bushmen*, *Pygmies*, *Nuer*, *Yoruba*, and finally ethnic groups. Otherwise, Africans come to constitute a larger collectivity that appears to endure only as “Negroes” or “Black Africans,” in short, as a putative “race”.

Throughout the post-colonial period, the study of African states has resulted in an incessant series of eulogies for failed or collapsed states, where a central government in one country after another is no longer able to provide the leadership and protection necessary for its population. These claims, however, largely ignore the presence of alternative and ulterior modes of governing a territory or a population and have all but completely ignored the existence of what is otherwise known as ethnic power or native authority. Rooted in the colonial period and the integration of methods of indirect rule, ethnic power structures have transcended the transition between colonial rule and postcolonial sovereignty and merit a much closer analysis if the African state in its modern-day manifestation is to be understood. Before we can begin to entertain a discussion of the idea of ethnic power – because, as we will see, this is really what is happening with the Nande – it is useful to finally clarify what is precisely meant by the word ethnic or ethnicity.

Mamdani puts ethnicity in the same semantic field as tradition, and he elaborates two ways of understanding tradition. First, tradition may be understood as a language; the language of tradition. We can then ask: what is the conventional language of tradition? For Mamdani, a tradition is a history of debates. Any development has to identify the points of growth. Nothing is pre-determined. The second understanding of tradition is one that considers the tradition as a given. This perspective focuses on the purity of tradition and assumes that tradition does not change. Any evidence of change means that the tradition is corrupt. The further back one goes, the purer the tradition. According to Mamdani, this is a colonial conception of tradition, which renders any other version of tradition unacceptable. The colonial power imposed this version as the authentic version of tradition and established a kind of canonical authority to protect it. An authentic tradition, then, could only come from an authentic authority. Mamdani argues that colonial power created an institutional authority, which had the power of a custodian over tradition and could enforce it. And ethnicity was one of its creations. Everybody had to have an ethnic group. This is the way colonial power ethnicised African societies (Mamdani 1996).

For Mamdani, ethnicity is a colonially constructed model. Indeed, before colonialism, people had multiple group identities, cultural identities, language

groups, and so on. If ethnicity is a language group, then one could join and become a member of a language community. By understanding ethnicity as a language group with a shared cultural history, one can become Arab, Swahili, Zulu, etc. In this way, ethnicity cannot be a biological notion, a sub-set of race; it becomes a biological notion of shared ancestry and common kinship within colonialism. Ethnicity is not in any definitive sense about blood ties.

Tshikala Biaya (2004) argues that Mamdani's understanding of ethnicity as a colonial construct has not adequately analysed what he calls ethnic power. ethnic power, according to him, is a power system based on ethnicity and the regrouping of people outside of the context of the central state (1998:109). Biaya defines ethnic power as a complex structure of power exercised via a set of institutions mutually integrated through a system of rationalities relative to the organisation and management of the local and global system. This vision modernises through multiple processes of production, accumulation, construction of knowledge and practices dictated by historical contingencies. Biaya elaborates his analysis through the lens of a two-pronged examination of ethnic groups and their participation in government – ethnic power – in both Senegal and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During the period of colonisation, systems of ethnic power were largely a construction of the dominating colonial force that relied on whatever construction of ethnicity would best benefit the hegemonic ruling ideals of the colonial force. Mamdani's idea of a bifurcated state (1999:55) is very applicable in this context, with the central state under the control of the colonial power and the ethnic or native authority controlling local governmental institutions. The duality of this ruling system was seen as necessary in most colonial situations in sub-Saharan Africa because of the impossibility of exerting effective control over such large populations with the limited number of colonial officials available at any given time.

An important consideration in this regard is that African politics and the modern-day manifestations of African governmental structures do not have the same historical or social context as their Western counterparts. Especially in studies of the performance of the African state, Western examples are often used as a starting point of comparison with the assumption that the African state should endeavour to replicate this structure. However, more recent difficulties in the establishment of a stable and viable democratic state in many African countries have brought to the forefront the true nuances of the different African states and have shown the necessity of understanding this political structure as the unique body that it is, not in its similitude to any Western or European state.

Biaya develops the idea of ethnic power as a vehicle by which the colonising force extends its own control over local populations through the institution of "ethnic" rulers who act as a sort of proxy for colonial power. The construction

of different ethnicities and the subsequent mise en place of an authority to rule over these “ethnicities” was a convenient way for colonial power to exert control over a vast space and huge population. The practice of “indirect rule” in the context of the colonial state was, according to Mamdani, much more successful in sub-Saharan Africa than it ever had been in India or China (1996:184). In Africa, the colonisers were able to perfect the domination of a central hegemonic and racist state over the tribal or traditional society. Yet in certain circumstances, ethnic power structures were also able to establish a deeper connection with the civil society because of practices and political thought that were distinctly different from Western science and ideology (Biaya 1998:110). The socio-political structures of ethnic rule were able to create a political space and with it, to negotiate with the central ruling apparatus. This was not always true, as in cases where ethnic power played more of a puppet role in relation to the central state; however, the distinction between the “ville moderne et blanche” and the “brousse noire” remained mostly intact throughout the colonial period. It is dangerous, however, to assume that all ethnicities benefited from the privileged ruling position. Relations between ethnicities were strained, sometimes even leading to inter-ethnic rivalries because of the favouritism often played by the colonial power in question (Biaya 1998:112). Biaya even goes so far as to characterise a civil war as the manifestation of tribalism where the traditional leader is able to oust the leader appointed by the colonial power (1998:112). An elevated level of clientalism along ethnic axes, as practised by certain colonial powers such as the Belgians in the Congo, led to concretised constructions of institutionalised ethnic groups and their respective social and political positions, whether as a part of the ruling apparatus, the working class, the peasantry or some other specific class formation.

The abuse and manipulation of ethnic groups, the inherent instigation of rivalries and what some might even call civil wars have spilled over into the post-colonial period, continuing the duality of the bifurcated state: a central state and the proliferation of local authorities functioning as competing for virtual state formation. In its contemporary application, the governments that continue to rely on ethnic power have the tendency to integrate the experience of both the colonial period and that of post-colonialism, creating a sort of liaison between the formality of state governmental practices and the local political culture. The gap between city and village has all but disappeared in many instances. These two locales intermingle, often resulting in a contestation of the practices of the central state. It is from this place of mutual discontent with the domination of the central state that the counter-power, as Biaya so aptly names it, is at least partly legitimised by civil society. As Biaya points out, this allowed the Diola of the Casamance in Senegal to integrate themselves simultaneously in both a local governing authority which answers to the state government in Dakar as well as in the Mouvement des force démocratiques de Casamance, the separatist movement

dominating the region (1998:110). This has also allowed for the integration of certain political and socially important ethnic political figures into customary society. Oftentimes, these political figures become much more important than the central state, exerting influence and control over entire regions and ethnic groups. Biaya describes these structures, such as the Murides in Senegal and the Luba in the Congo, as parallel power structures that coexist with, and sometimes even challenge, the central state (1998:113).

The Nande Ethnic Groups

Indeed, if ethnicity is understood as social group with a homogeneous culture, a common language, and a common territory, then there is no such thing as ethnicity in Africa, as Enselé correctly objected. However, ethnicity as a social group that recognises a common identity with respect to its relations to others and not as a self-contained and homogenous group, more closely resembles the Nande ethnic group. Indeed, Nande ethnic particularity congeals only over time and in relation to particular historical and sociopolitical circumstances. Ethnicity is different from other social identities such as political community, class, etc., because it is constructed in terms of a special relation to ancestry: members of an ethnic group think that they share the same historical origins (Petit 1996).

Nande ethnic identity is constructed around the idea that they all share the same origins which go back to the Bantu migrations some centuries ago. If ethnicity, like other social identities changes according to the contexts, it is precisely through these changing contexts that it needs to be understood. Nande ethnicity is indeed a constructed social fact. It is a construction based on multiple historical bases. Nande ethnic identity is an ideological fact as well as an objective reality; it is a sort of social strategy, which defines the zones of solidarity and the zones of conflict. Indeed, like all ethnic identities, Nande ethnicity is not a simple expression of the present time. According to Vansina (1994), it is based on historical constructions that each generation contributes to define without reinventing it completely. Let me expand on Vansina's thesis.

Among the two dozen millionaires in Butembo today, there is only one who is not Nande. Musangania is a *Hunde* from Goma who made commercial inroads in Butembo because of the monopoly of the commercialisation of beer. Musangania and Maman Elize, a Nande widow, are the two traders who provide beer to the population of Butembo. They buy it from Bukavu in South Kivu and ship it to Butembo. Musangania is really an exception in the territories of Beni and Lubero (of which Butembo forms part), which are inhabited almost exclusively by the Nande, and especially in Butembo's market place. The following anecdote is telling: "If a non-Nande person sells bananas at the market in Butembo, no matter how cheap he sells them in comparison to Nande banana sellers,

nobody will buy them. Nande people will prefer to buy the expensive bananas from another Nande than buy the cheaper ones from a “foreigner”.¹ There is indeed an exaggeration in this anecdote, but the point is that the Nande are known for being very autarkic and exclusive of others. What remains true, however, is the fact that beside Musangania, there is no non-Nande trader who has ever been successful in Butembo. The reason has generally nothing to do with ethnicity, but it has everything to do with the market. Actually, Butembo is a sort of warehouse where goods from overseas are stocked and sold around the region. Nande traders have networks of people, mostly family members who are in charge of selling the products in the hinterlands and all over the North Kivu region and beyond. Non-Nande traders usually do not have these networks and are generally confined to the Butembo market. This is the main reason for their lack of success, not any kind of tribal exclusion from the market dynamism.

This study characterises the Nande network as made up of “ethnic trust networks”, meaning that they are networks with trust as a constitutive element but with another element of cohesion – ethnic belonging. The latter has been shaped by a reported spirit of autarky and self-subsistence, which originates in a specific protestant work ethic. These observations can be found through local expressions such as “if you wait for the fruit to fall from the tree, you will fall asleep hungry”. Or “if the chick does not pierce its own shell, it will die within it”. Religious leaders such as the Roman Catholic Bishop Emmanuel Kataliko played an important role in constructing a sense of “Nande-ness” as distinguished by a common spirit of autarky and self-reliance. In 1971, Kataliko wrote the following pamphlet entitled “Aide-toi, et le ciel t’aidera” (*Help Yourself First and Heaven Will Help You*):

The best way out of underdevelopment, poverty, and to serve the population, is to arouse the spirit of “self-help”, however, left to help this population by providing what she herself cannot find one to ensure its own development. According to the order of priority, the creation of means of communication is the foundation of any development, economic, social, cultural and spiritual progress: a country or region without roads remains isolated, backward. How could one actually rescue a village located 50, 80, 100 km away, if the village cannot be reached as quickly as possible? And when there are roads, we still need to maintain them; otherwise you go back to the misery of the past, this time because of negligence, recklessness and even the unwillingness of the population and opportunistic officials, selfish, non-concern for the common good. In a word, the economic, social, cultural life cannot progress without contacts with the outer world. That is why the people of the territory of Lubero and Beni have understood the problem, seeking to break the isolation and underdevelopment, led by some leaders and officials determined, not hesitating to work, to roll up sleeves. They understand that there is no point in

lamenting, in waiting blissfully and desperately for a relief coming from the sky. Some regions, chiefdoms awake; people retake their tools: one a hoe, another a machete, picks and spades or shovel. Although these instruments are rudimentary in modern times to do work achievable by machines, we don't shy away: the courage, tenacity, the strong will are the stimulant.²

Kataliko was inviting Nande people to count first on their own talents, intelligence and self-reliance to develop their region; nothing will come from heaven without people's contribution.

While I recognise that ethnicity is a very important factor of Nande commercial dynamism, it does not suggest that we consider the Nande as a concrete, coherent people. The first striking thing an ethnographer sees with the Nande ethnic group is that there is no one "*mwami*" or chief of all the Nande. Instead, there are nine decentralised and autonomous chiefdoms: Batangi, Baswaga, Bamate, Bapere, Bapakombe, Babira, Baamba, Bambuti. This very politically fragmented Nande region was consolidated under the chiefdom of Ngulo, who assumed the office of Grand Chief³ of the Baswaga (Bergmans 1970:63). Even though Kinande is the common language in these chiefdoms, they see each other as aliens. A Nande from the Batangi chiefdom will not marry a Nande from the Bapere chiefdom. The Nande from Butembo in the Batangi chiefdom consider themselves as superior to the Nande from Beni in the Bambuti chiefdom. Within the Catholic Church, for example, the Nande are in the diocese of Beni-Butembo, but there has always been talk about separation between the Catholic priests from Beni and those from Butembo. The few Nande who are involved in official politics today are from Beni in the Bambuti chiefdom. Traders who are generally from Butembo in the Batangi chiefdom have difficulties supporting them. Mbusa Nyamuisi, for example, who is the current minister of foreign affairs in the Kabila government, is a Nande from Beni, but in order to get support from traders, he had to establish his home in Butembo where he has built a mansion. The Nande from the Congo consider themselves superior to the Konjo, who are the Nande from Uganda. One of my Nande friends told me one day that "it is the lowest class of Nande who went to the British side of the Kingdom of Gitara".

To these internal divisions, one should add the fierce competition among traders in the Nande region. The emergence of the Nande "trust network" does not at all mean that transactions in the community are happening according to a well-structured and equitable scheme. On the contrary, trading activities in Butembo is a marketing warfare. A young trader once told me that he had shipped a container of sportswears to Butembo from Dubai which he was selling \$5 a piece. But, another trader who knew what he was selling, bought from Gouangzhou, China, two 20-ft containers of the same kind of sportswears

and sold them at US \$2 a piece. The young man was obliged to reduce his price in order to sell his stock and could not even regain the capital he invested. These kinds of practices are very common, especially from very rich traders vis-à-vis the emerging young *commerçants*, as they are called in Butembo. Inside Butembo the impression one gets is that traders want to destroy one another since the competition is very strong.

Finally, Nande traders maintain a rather ambiguous relationship with their kin. The exploitative and oppressive nature of their relationship to their kin is visible through the monthly salaries they pay them, if they do. Nande traders also oppress the mass of peasants by appropriating the fertile land.

The most striking consequence of the intra-ethnic competition is that it is not in spite of, but rather because of, the strong intra-ethnic competition among the Nande that some of their community members have been able to reach out beyond the original spatial, economic, and mental boundaries of the group's economy and even politics. Rather than providing a basis for inside solidarity, intra-ethnic competition seems to act as facilitator to outside links. Inter-ethnic competition, in contrast, constrains such relationships with outside groups, a condition that is dangerous for trading activities. Nande need outside communities as buyers and clients. The sense of cohesion of the Nande ethnic group remains an ideological illusion as far as the intra-ethnic relations are concerned, but this prompts a sense of strong Nande ethnic identity, which allows the production of "trust networks" in the space of engagement, i.e. outside Nande mental boundaries.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Nande ethnic particularity congeals over time and in relation to particular historical and sociopolitical circumstances. The specificities of their sociopolitical history literally produced them as Nande and contributes to the reification of that collective identity as a new ethnicity. ethnicity has been a strong explanatory element of the explanation of socio-economic order in the Nande region. The situation that has emerged in Butembo during the last decade is not only exploitative of the family structure, but also socially exclusive in the sense that it applies only to the Nande ethnic community. At the same time, strong intra-ethnic competition among the Nande has helped some of them to reach out beyond the economic and mental boundaries of their group. In fact, the inward and outward focus of the Nande trading network is sustained by a tenuous balance between the dependence on the local polity – where influences and practices interact and come together – and the engagement with other groups and enterprises outside the immediate relationships that is necessary to mobilise their economic and relational resources.

Nande traders have built quasi-family relations with Arabs and Chinese. These relations have helped them not only to increase their economic capital, but also to legitimate their status as power brokers in the Nande community. This late move does not go without conflict or crisis since it is resented by the old community elite who are the elders and the intellectuals. The next chapter will show that even if the Nande traders' leadership is accepted for its contribution to development, it is not accepted when it attempts to overtake the community leadership from the elders and the post-colonial intellectuals.

Notes

1. From conversation with informants in Butembo.
2. "La meilleure façon de sortir du sous développement, de la misère, et de rendre service à la population, est de susciter l'esprit de "self-help", quitte cependant à aider cette population en lui fournissant ce qu'elle-même ne peut pas trouver pour assurer seule son propre développement. Selon l'ordre prioritaire, la création des moyens de communication est à la base de tout développement, de tout progrès économique et social, culturel et spirituel: un pays ou une région sans réseau routier reste fermé, arriéré. Comment pourrait-on en effet secourir un village situé à 50, 80, 100km, si l'on ne sait pas l'atteindre aussi rapidement que possible! Et quand on a des routes, encore faut-il les entretenir, sans quoi on retourne à la misère d'antan, cette fois à cause de la négligence, de l'insouciance et même de la mauvaise volonté de la population et des responsables parvenus, égoïstes, non-soucieux du bien commun. En un mot, la vie économique, sociale, culturelle ne voit et ne verra le progrès que grâce aux contacts faciles et rapides avec d'autres mondes. C'est pourquoi les populations du territoire de Beni et de Lubero ayant compris le problème, désireuses de sortir de l'isolement et du sous-développement, animées par certains "leaders" et responsables bien décidés, n'hésitent pas à se mettre au travail, au 'retroussons les manches'. Elles comprennent que rien ne sert de se lamenter et d'attendre béatement et désespérément un secours quelconque qui leur viendrait du ciel. Des régions, des chefferies se réveillent ; les gens reprennent les instruments, qui la houe, qui la machette, qui la pioche et la pique, qui la bêche ou la pelle. Bien que ces instruments soient rudimentaires dans le temps moderne pour faire des travaux réalisables par des machines, on ne recule pas: le courage, la ténacité, la ferme volonté sont le stimulant."
3. The colonialists attempted to fashion the office of the Grand Chief into a local administration who would assist them in implementing social and economic policies, oversee the collection of taxes, assist in the procurement of agricultural produce, and help in the recruitment of labour. Indeed, all these roles, with the exception of the tax collection, were largely alien to the Baswaga conception of a chief's role.

The Elite Question

The rich outsmarted the intellectual solely because they understood the power of money, a subject not taught in schools.

Robert Kiyosaki

This chapter demonstrates that maintaining trustful relations among Nande trading networks is not as easy as it sounds. Traders have to fight other actors, who are also contenders for control of social surplus. The new entrepreneurial elite who emerged from the disintegration of the DRC state are challenged by two former social elites: the customary elite and the intellectual elite. This chapter discusses the uneasy relationship within Butembo – between the customary and the intellectual elite, on the one hand, and the entrepreneurial elite, on the other hand.

The chapter will first define the notion of elite and how these elites were created. Second, it will lay out concretely how the commercial elite have taken over the role of the new power brokers, sometimes at the expense of the customary elite and the intellectual elite. Finally, the chapter will explain the nature and the role of the Catholic Church in the Nande social landscape.

Defining the Elite

There are two fundamental interpretations that predominate modern historiography. Liberal interpretations of history tend to link all big events to identifiable individual agents or actors, governments, thinkers, social leaders, and those who support them. The colonial history of the Congo has generally been represented as a history of strongmen, such as King Leopold, ministers of the colony, explorers, military and civilian administrators, and missionaries. Colonial historiography completely ignores the part played by Africans. The colonial history is challenged

by Marx's analysis of relationships of domination and plunder that characterised this era, which he derisively designated as the so-called 'primitive accumulation' of capital. Even the diplomatic relations that allowed European powers to divide Africa during the 19th century were the result of social dynamics playing out their rivalries on the global battlefield. Thus, an alternative way of interpreting history insists on social forces as agents of transformation. Marx reduced these social forces to class struggle, but they need to be extended to include a more variable spectrum of social identities (Giddens 1987), (this would be inappropriate as a critique of Marx, as it appears here in a sentence about him).

These two perspectives should not be opposed as if they were radically separable. To act historically, actors or agents need to be part of larger collective forces. Historical forces are not mechanical. As E.P. Thompson¹ (1968) put it: "The British working class did not appear overnight like the sun at the time it was expected, it had indeed participated in its own creation and its formation depended on agents' actions as well as on social conditions. Social groups are not ready-made facts, they are constructed by actors". Indeed, Marx himself was the first to formulate the critical standpoint whereby people may be understood to make their own history (Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire*). However, the Marxist interpretation is complicated by an acknowledgement that collective actors or social forces are not always comprised exclusively of those occupying the same position in the social relations of production. Social identities, such as groups of people sharing the same culture or ethnicity, are also historical agents because of the mobilising force that identity can provide. These precise social conditions and historical circumstances, in which identity may be mobilised, are the subject of research on ethnicity as one such social identity. Social struggle does not arise only from conflicts of material interests, but also from the recognition that the dignity and the fundamental rights of a group have been systematically violated.² The force of a historical figure, such as a strongman, stems largely from a wider constellation of people whom he manages to mobilise because they identify with his project.

In history, social positions and identities coexist both internally and externally. A change in mentality is never sufficient to enact social transformations. Yet, neither are economic and political changes sufficient in themselves to produce cultural change: at this level, nothing is fundamentally transformed unless the social identity from which individuals organise their affective investments are similarly transformed. Without this transformation, change may eventually be imposed by coercion, but this merely enacts what Ranajit Guha has called dominance without hegemony.

Creation of Intellectual Elites in the DRC

In the history of the Belgian Congo colony, the rise of an indigenous African elite is very difficult to define. Conventionally, the word elite has been used to designate the most educated people in the community. During the colonial history of the Congo, secondary and tertiary education was almost non-existent except for those studying to become priests and catechists. Therefore, one considered as elite those Congolese who were instrumental in writing dictionaries, making translations, and playing a compromised role in the administrative re-organisation of the country under colonial rule. However, each social group creates its own elite when it becomes self-conscious. The working class in Europe was only formed as a self-conscious class when it came to create its own organised leadership (or elites) because it did not recognise itself in the elites of the dominant society.

The question of elite was similarly posed during the run up to Independence. Contrary to those who consider leaders of Independence as the already established Congolese elite, Herbert Weiss showed, in his study of *Parti Solidaire* in Kwilu, that leaders were pushed by the radicalism of their peasant bases. This was clearly a case of the preponderance of social forces in the formation of historical individuals. Yet, could peasant radicalism have developed without its own organic leaders? Indeed, one must acknowledge that during the Independence movement there were already multiple elites and multiple social forces in competition.

Intellectuals are necessary agents of social change. No movement could reach its goals without thinking heads committed to formulating strategies and programmatic visions for change. Yet, intellectuals are not independent arbiters of social conflicts. They have their own solidarities and can side with power and against the revolutionaries when their interests and their sympathies are bound to the existing social order.

Moreover, it is not enough to have intelligence, intellectual sophistication, or educational credentials, to assume power. In order to lead, one needs to have sufficient capacity to mobilise collective forces in time and space to make a mark on history. Intellectuals do not have any special advantages at this level and may, in fact, have severe disadvantages. Their historical action is effectively determined by the social solidarity in which they inscribe their lives and actions. Their behaviours are also shaped by various social forces, modes of institutional organisation, and multiple social pressures emanating from their social milieu.

Following Guy Rocher and David McClelland (1968) it is important to note that:

1. The notion of elite refers to a small group of individuals (a de facto moral person) with exceptional aptitudes and qualities, and may not be simply equated

with any given physical person, who might nonetheless be part of that group. A leader may be part of an elite, but should not be identified with them.

2. Not every intellectual necessarily belongs to the intellectual elite. The elite, likewise, is not necessarily synonymous with intellectuals. There is indeed a plurality of elites as there is a plurality of social spheres in the community.
3. A person belonging to one elite group does not necessarily have the capacity to play the role of elite in another sphere. The horizontal mobility of elite is not necessarily a positive thing. An excellent university professor, for instance, is not necessarily a good political leader or an effective economic manager.

In the DRC, nonetheless, the school remains the most important institution for producing the professional intellectual elite. For reasons related to Belgian colonial politics, the formation of an indigenous intellectual elite was very slow, compared to French colonies. The Indian disease³ against which Lord Lugard had warned the British colonialists was still in the air. *Pas d'élite, pas d'ennui* (no elite, no trouble) was the leitmotiv of Belgian colonial politics. To avoid the Indian disease, Belgian colonial power had organised the educational system in such a way that they equipped the indigenous population with just enough training to become white men's aids. However, this was done without regard to the insidious and unintended effects of literacy, which inevitably gave low-level secretaries, school teachers, nurses, and agricultural instructors the desire and determination to learn still more. At the end of the Second World War, the heroic participation of a Congolese battalion in the battle of Ethiopia encouraged educated Congolese to claim the status of *évolué*⁴ and an appropriate education for their children. In 1948, therefore, the educational reform was introduced, and a system of six years of primary school and six years of high school started. The University of Lovanium (established in 1954), the Official University of Congo (UOC) (established in 1956), and Saint Gerome Teacher College (1959) were the result of the 1948 reform of education. Despite these developments, the creation of a strong and autonomous elite in the Congo continued to be resisted. Brilliant students were selected for the priesthood and sent to seminaries where their evolution could be controlled. That is why the intellectual elite of this period were almost exclusively Roman Catholic priests. The *évolués* were lay people who would organise into unions and shape the public and collective political consciousness.⁵ Female intellectual elites were absent during this period because of the weight of the tradition that denied women the opportunity to attend school. Those who studied were only trained to be housewives, or school teachers. These careers were supposed to prepare them to become the wives of *évolués*.⁶

Education During Mobutu's Zaire

Until 1989, when the Bishop Emmanuel Kataliko started the Catholic University of Graben, Butembo had no institution of higher learning. But since the 1990s, numerous universities and institutes for tertiary education have mushroomed in the region. Lawyers, medical and veterinarian doctors, political scientists, engineers, and teachers are being produced and compete for a space among the intellectual elite in Nande society. However, their position has been severely weakened by the general neglect of education in Mobutu's Zaire. Like other social services, education was neglected and salaries for state employees were extremely low. The table below shows how expenditure was distributed during Mobutu's last two decades in power.

Table 5: Distribution of State Expenditure, 1972-1992 (%)

Year	President's Expenditure	Agriculture	Social Services
1972	28.0	29.3	17.5
1974	26.0	32.1	12.4
1976	29.0	30.9	13.2
1978	29.0	41.0	11.0
1980	33.0	42.0	11.0
1982	35.0	32.0	10.0
1984	39.0	30.0	9.0
1986	39.0	29.0	7.0
1988	49.0	18.0	4.0
1990	80.0	11.0	2.0
1992	95.0	11.0	0.0

Sources: Banque du Zaire, *Rapport Annuel*, various issues.

In 1992, Mobutu allocated no state expenditure whatsoever to social services or physical infrastructure. He relied on his extensive personal networks rather than effective institutions for the survival of his regime. Siphoning of state resources for personal benefit was the main preoccupation of the Mobutu regime. This wealth was used not to finance the infrastructure which produced it or to help develop the local economy, but rather was spent in conspicuous consumption (luxuriant lifestyles at home and also in his multiple European mansions) or private deposits in foreign banks. According to Wrong (2000:191) special Zairian Central

Bank accounts existed in Brussels, Frankfurt, Geneva and London under the president's name and were never featured in official records. The Mobutu regime created parasitic capitalists instead of entrepreneurial local capitalists. As Verhaegen emphasised with reference to the Zairian economy:

Instead of accumulating and transforming profits into a greater production capacity, producing more goods and generating more profits, the Mobutu regime wastes and distributes with the desire, sometimes caricatured, to do the opposite of the coloniser. Where the coloniser saved, it redistributes; efforts at investment have been supplanted by spending for ostentation, costly trumpery, or clientelist support (Verhaegen 1995:45).

With good reason, Peter Evans labelled Zaire a textbook case of a predatory state. It preyed on its citizenry, terrorising them, despoiling their common patrimony, and providing little in the way of services in return (Evans 1995: p.45).

MacGaffey detailed how the parasitic state allowed those in the top echelons of society to use their virtually unlimited power to pillage the natural riches of their country and amass vast fortune. Nevertheless, despite the Congo's unfavourable history, a genuine nascent bourgeoisie of local capitalists who do not hold political positions also emerged. These entrepreneurs have invested in productive enterprises for the local market and have managed and expanded their businesses in a rational capitalist fashion (The State and Capitalism in Zaire 1994:193).

Although high education is no longer regarded generally as a path to a position of social leadership or the elite society in the Congo, it has however remained the only way to achieve social mobility. The intellectual elite are still very influential in the community even though they are not paid at all. The emergence of the Nande entrepreneurial elite has eroded the residue of influence the intellectuals enjoyed. Customary elites, as we will see, are still very important in places like Butembo because the Nande have remained a rural, traditional and conservative community. Nonetheless, the customary elite's strong influence is being similarly challenged by the traders or new entrepreneurial elite.

Customary or Traditional Elite in the DRC

Customary authority, which was historically the source of indigenous elites at the local level, was destroyed by colonial power. The influence of the traditional or customary elite was nullified and replaced by the political order and social organisation imposed by Belgian colonialism. In the Congo, like much of the rest of Africa, customary power was organised around land. If the land tenure system consisted of a set of institutions that structured the social organisation of space, then it could be argued that its evolution could be characterised by three main elements (Acker 2005). First, land is held in common by a group

circumscribed by the boundaries of ethnicity, clan or lineage. Second, no property rights can be assigned beyond a simple use right (*usus*), thereby disabling alienation of parts of the collective domain, even in cases where a family may have farmed a plot of land for generations. Finally, land relations and social hierarchy mirror each other. To achieve the construction of social hierarchy and hence power relations, use rights (*usus*) do not entail full benefit rights (*fructus*) because of the appropriation of land rents as tribute. Tributes are redistributed upwards in an elaborate system of dependency that configures a collective management of economic uncertainty. As Aker (2005) explains in this *weltanchung*, ethnic boundaries are not rigid. Immigrants can obtain access to land as long as they also acquire the status of client, which is tantamount to assimilation. In this social setting, land is a common good; no one can be excluded even though it is used competitively, i.e. a household cannot cultivate a plot already used by another.

The concept of *Vusoki* in Nande land system translates more clearly the kind of contract that binds an individual to the land. *Vusoki* is an institution that legitimises the whole social organisation by absorbing all persons within a given area into a network of dependent relations. It implies a tight social pyramid with the top being occupied by the *Mwami* (the king, also called *Ise-Mwami*), followed hierarchically by the *Ise-Mumbo* (lords), the *Nyavana* (landlord with responsibility for a hill), the *Bashakulu* (wise pater familias with property, also called simply elders).⁷ Economically, the security of *Vusoki* required an initial payment and an annual rent as well as labour to be paid to the patron. For a peasant family, for example, the system exchanged social integration and, hence, security for loyalty to the *mwami* who received power and prestige in exchange for granting non-alienable use rights over the customary domain. However, this system was not feudal, if feudalism is taken to imply social immobility. Indeed, the system allowed social mobility in return for the expansion of the collective domain. By clearing new land or forest, a man could extend the collective domain while gaining use rights to the newly cleared land. To the extent that use rights were further divisible, they allowed him to exact tribute, propelling him higher into the hierarchy as the head of the new lineage. As stated above, immigrants could also obtain access to land as long as they also acquired the status of client. The basic principle of having land as a common good is that no social actor could be refused the right to access and use land, as long as he respected the principle that ensured social integration.

In this traditional setting, land remains the integrative focus of social relations. Thus, the aspect of non-excludability defines the relational resources rooted in these patrimonial relations. Here, as above, I describe relational resources as the level of generalised trust and adherence to norms of reciprocity, embedded in the way institutions shape and constrain social interaction. By traditional elite, I refer to those prominent figures in the system constructed around land as an

integrative factor of social relations. The *mwami*, the noblemen, the lords, underlords, and large farmers were all the respected elders in the traditional system. Hinged on the premise that land reserves were sufficient to extend the collective domain in step with the population growth, the traditional system exploded when population growth became uncontrollable.

The Kivu held a unique position with regard to population growth. The highlands of North Kivu are the most densely populated parts of the Congo. The large number of Rwandans and Burundians emigrating into the Kivu is already well over the high natural growth rate of 3.1 per cent (World Bank 1994). During the colonial era, immigration was actively encouraged through policy measures. After the independence of the Congo, large numbers of Rwandans and Burundians continued to emigrate to the Congo, either to escape the economic conditions of their homelands or to escape the many waves of political violence and persecution. This reached a climax in the 1980s when, in the DRC as a whole, only 13.4 per cent of the population lived in areas with a density higher than 100 inhabitants per square kilometre, while the figure was 49 per cent in the Kivu province (De Saint Moulin 1995).

This unstoppable population growth subverted the very principle of traditional social cohesion and the customary right to land. Non-occupied land was not simply vacant. Rather, it had always been the basis of collective security and social mobility. The traditional elite have predictably suffered from this dramatic growth of population because it was no longer possible to impose their authority. The land on which the traditional social structure was built has been increasingly reduced. A 1973 law declared all land, whether vacant or occupied and without regard to the type of occupation, to be the property of the state. It discarded customary law in land transactions as a legitimate source of land rights, without abiding any legal status to lands thus occupied. Hence, it institutionalised uncertainty by dispensing with the notion of diffuse property rights and introduced the conditions for the formation of a class of landless people. Furthermore, the law created the possibility to turn economic assets into political ones that could be used to reward loyal clients of the state and vice versa, thereby transforming social connections into economic assets. Customary land could now be appropriated by administrative procedure, as well as the de facto nationalised concessions previously awarded by the colonial authorities to colonial planters. Land later appeared, particularly in North Kivu, as an attractive investment with the potential for speculation (Tsongo 1994). In implementing the 1973 law, it was more practical to revoke the legitimacy of former colonial allocations by nationalising plantations, than it was to refute the socially embedded legitimacy of customary allocations. As North (1990) points out, informal norms have a high degree of continuity – antecedent institutions operate to reduce uncertainty in periods of transition.

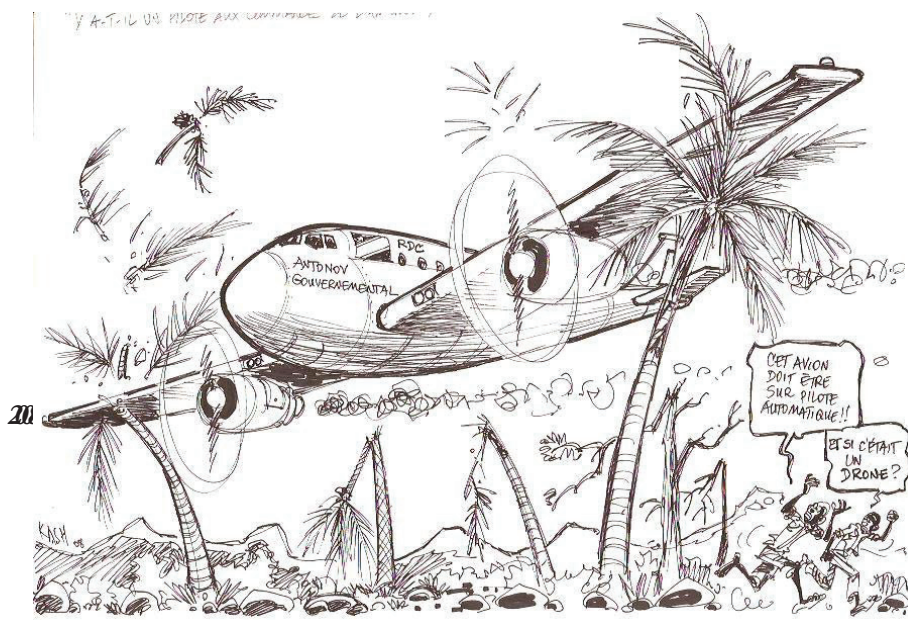
Most important for my purposes is the interplay that funnelled land informally from the customary to the modern domain and then endorsed the transfer by state administrative procedures (e.g. registration). These transfers severely weakened the customary moral authorities in the sense that they (customary authorities) were co-opted into the new administrative system and allowed interested actors to obtain land freed from any customary encumbrances (Aker 2005:850). The process also allowed for the appropriation of land rent. The *mwami* was in a unique position to mediate interaction over the boundaries of the normative duality introduced in 1973, occupying a cardinal role in both networks of customary and state patronage. Mobutu underlined this paramount importance of chiefs by allowing judicial, administrative, and political power to be united in their person. As Aker puts it, the colonial system gave *Bami* the authority of president of customary courts. Mobutu integrated these positions in the judicial set-up of the modern Zairian state.⁸ This authority was contrary to tradition. As *chef de collectivité*, the chief becomes an official element in the administrative chain of command from the national capital to the rural areas. By the the same token, he becomes one of the *collectivité* members of President Mobutu's single party. As an administrative head of these entities, the chief could officially declare any village land vacant and then preside over the land allocation disputes in the customary courts.⁹

Since Mobutu's administration could not deliver on the basic needs of Zaire's citizenry, people became increasingly annoyed with the chiefs. Despite distance from the central government and the co-optation of traditional authorities by the Mobutu government, however, Nande traditional chiefs *retained* their prestige and moral authority. The Nande social structure remains very hierarchically organised around the *mwami*¹⁰ and the elders. As senior members of the community and witnesses to its past, elders occupy positions of moral authority within the Nande community and they use their position to fortify the contract between generations. It is these traditional elite who are unsettled by the emergence and increasing influence of traders.

Elite Struggle in Butembo

When I arrived in Butembo in August 2005, Nande traders had moved from being traders at the margins of the law (Macgaffey and Bazanguissa-Ganga 2000) to being lawmakers themselves and increasingly moving to the prominent position of local political and economic brokers. Through its web of social relations, the Nande trading network successfully imposed its power over the local socio-economical domain and was increasingly seen as the legitimated regulatory authority, at the expenses of the old elites. The trust network literally took over certain state functions, such as mending the roads, building an airport, and electrifying the city.

The inflow and outflow of merchandise depends on the state of the road, which is a *sine qua non* condition for the mobility of local and external products. The lack of good roads is generally blamed on the Mobutu regime and the successive wars that engulfed the country. For instance, the road between Beni and the most important inland port, Kisangani, was completely neglected and dramatically reduced the trade between the North Kivu and the Oriental Province. Similarly, commerce between Kisangani and Butembo/Beni is now done by air. According to ENRA statistics, air transport at Beni had tripled from 2000 to 2003 going from 1,121 to 2,437 landings and from 2,467 to 5,923 tonnes of merchandise. Owned by Nande traders and piloted by Ukrainian crews of dubious backgrounds, these cargo planes remain the most dangerous means of transport in the region. The planes are not insured, and the number of crashes is phenomenal,¹¹ as depicted in the following cartoon by Thembo Kash Kashauri in *le Potentiel* of 17 July.



In 2000, Nande traders decided to build a new international airport to replace the existing small airfield at Rwenda. They engaged engineers to do the work, but failed to consult with competent national aviation experts and decided to build the airport on a hill. After a while, government had to stop construction because it was not proceeding according to international standards for an airport.

The airport is now being rebuilt, not in Butembo as the traders had wanted, but on the outskirts of Beni, 40 miles north of Butembo.

In 1994, Nande traders decided to take the responsibility of mending the local road system and put in place road tax to pay for the reconstruction of the roads in and out of Butembo. But, the actual implementation of this initiative started only in 1999 because of the Rwandan genocide and its subsequent refugee crisis in the region. In 1999, the corporation of traders of Butembo (FEC) asked all users of the local road system to contribute to the reconstruction of these roads through the tollgate. At the beginning, the project was limited to two main commercial roads, Butembo-Beni and Beni-Kasindi. It was later extended to the north Beni-Irengeti and to the south Butembo-Kanyabayongo. Trucks pay \$100 from Butembo to Kasindi. The revenue of the road toll is deposited in a Federation of Traders treasury, and the funds are then distributed to individual traders, who are charged with the repairs of 50 kilometres of the road.¹²

The case of electrification of Butembo is even more interesting.¹³ The corporation of traders wanted to electrify Butembo. A French firm estimated the construction of the dam and the distribution of electricity in the city at \$8 million. Traders considered the price too high and then contacted John De Bruyn, a South African engineer, who offered to do the job at half of that price. The traders granted the contract to Clakson Power, Mr. De Bruyn's company. After many months of work, the electrical dam was constructed, and Société d'Electricité du Nord Kivu (SENOKI) was put in charge of the distribution of the electric power in Butembo. Unfortunately, Clakson Power was able to generate only a very few kilowatts of electricity which he distributed only once a month. It was a complete fiasco. *Le Potentiel*, a Congolese daily newspaper wrote the following version of the origins of SENOKI:

The origins of Butembo's electrification project lay in the 1970s, when a company called SOCOPLAKI operated a dam near Kisla – at 40 km from Butembo. Lack of resources prohibited the company from making a difference, however. At the time, the Mobutu government preferred to devote its energy to the massive Inga-dam project, which theoretically had to provide 1,775 megawatts of electricity of the African continent but, due to serious mismanagement, only supplied a fraction of this. During the RDC-ML occupation, a group of Butembo's businessmen decided to meet with bishop Melchisedech and introduce a new dam at Ivua, situated at only a few km from the town's centre. Their biggest preoccupation was to restart the electrification of their enterprises, which only ran at minimum capacities due to power problems (the alternative were mostly Chinese petrol-operated micro-stations, which broke down repeatedly due to poor quality). The initial capital the businessmen invested in this project was US\$25,000, which was raised by around 25 people. Abbe Malu Malu, who was the bishop's right hand in terms of practical matters

(he also was the dean of the local university) contacted a number of foreign companies that could potentially be interested in this local investment. One of these candidates was Hydraulique Sans Frontiere, a French NGO that specialises amongst others in hydro-electricity. However, because there was a war going on at the moment, they refused to start with the construction work. According to Hydraulique Sans Frontiere, Butembo would not get financing for this project before the next 8 years. Then a South-African appeared who [had] worked for Dara Forest, the timber company that had already been named in relation to Uganda's plundering activities in the DRC. The man contacted another company, Clarkson Power, run by a certain Eric Clarkson and his son, John. This company apparently managed to raise US\$3 million in 2003, with the promise to start constructing immediately. The businessmen in turn contributed another US\$ 300.000 in a joint fund called SENOKI (Societe d'Electrification du Nord Kivu).

Initially, the project appeared to run very well. Clarkson Power introduced a system of electric counters, which were operated by introducing cards that could be bought from the company. Quite quickly, however, the town experienced repeated electricity breakdowns. Each time the system failed, the businessmen were asked to contribute more money so that the system could be repaired. After some reparation works, the system worked again for a few weeks, until it broke down again. Towards 2005, the businessmen's contribution was already nearing one million US\$, but the system continued breaking down at regular intervals. In the course of that year, Mr Clarkson disappeared from Butembo, only to reappear again in Katende (Kasia Orientale) to reintroduce a similar project there in August (*Le Potentiel* 5 August 2005).¹⁴

I attended a meeting of SENOKI consumers in October 2005. It turned out that many local intellectuals also attended the meeting where they chastised the traders for not consulting them at the inception of the project. Some were in fact happy that the hydro-electric project failed. Reading between the lines, it is obvious that these indictments underscore the struggle between the two camps of elite. The latter are blatantly disregarded by the former in matters of general interest. The commercial elite, being mostly uneducated, are accustomed to doing things their own way. It is only when the third group, the religious elite made up largely by members of the Catholic Church, intervene that all the elite groups are able to achieve any coordination of activities, which makes it possible for them to collaborate on such projects as constructing university auditoriums for students of the Catholic University of Graben or giving donations for the construction of the University of Great Lakes, the Protestant University.

In other words, one key dimension of the power struggle between elites in Butembo is defined by mutual antagonisms between the intellectual elite, who are generally leading a miserable life because the government does not function properly and cannot take care of them, and an uneducated commercial elite,

whose businesses are flourishing and are thus in a position to impose order on the conduct of municipal affairs on their own terms. The traders, whose influence has increased tremendously over the last ten years with the disintegration of the Congo, are indeed the new power brokers, and they show it sometimes by bullying or marginalising non-commercial elites, with the exception of the Catholic clerics.

The Catholic Church

Why should one discuss the Catholic Church when the vast majority of traders are Protestants and have been reared with a Baptist work ethic, as we have seen? Despite the fact that traders had become the lawmakers and the legitimate power brokers, the most powerful single person in Butembo is the Roman Catholic Bishop of Butembo, Monsignor Mechisedech Sikulu Paluku. Everyone in Butembo knows that the real decision makers in the city are the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the traders. Many projects in Butembo have been realised by the initiative of the Church and the traders with very minimum intervention of the state. There is, for example, a prison run by state authorities. But, as I have seen, a priest can have someone jailed in the prison without following any due process. During my interview with the Monsignor Sikulu, I asked him if he considered himself to be a *Mwami*, a traditional chief. His answer was: No, but, he added, nothing could be decided in Butembo without me being consulted and giving the final approval, that is how things work; the elders have the last word. Why is a Catholic Bishop so powerful in a city where the dominant elite are Protestant traders? The answer is to be found in the 1970s when the former Bishop of Butembo, Monsignor Emmanuel Kataliko played a very critical role in reconciling two opposed branches of Baptists. What exploded in the 1970s between the Baptists who were dubbed progressists and those who were named traditionalists, was a conflict that had actually been building up since the colonial period. The conflict originally involved whether to accept or to refuse the colonial government's education subsidies.

Education Subsidy Debate¹⁵

In the late colonial period, the Baptist missionaries were at a quandary over how to finance the educational improvements and yet remain consistent with their mission's professed philosophy. The crucial point was whether or not to accept government subsidies for schools. It was an issue that would increasingly become a source of discontent among Africans during the decade of the 1950s. Catholic schools had enjoyed the benefits of state subsidies since the mid-1920s and for years members of the Congo Protestant Council had been lobbying for similar benefits, arguing that protestant subjects of the colony paid taxes but got no educational benefits in return (Stonelake 1937:113). In 1947, the Belgian parliament finally approved a plan for subsidising Protestant mission schools from 1948.

Some protestant mission groups welcomed the subsidy, but others, including the Baptist missionaries in Butembo, took a strong stand against it.

Before independence, general educational achievement in the country had become significant at the primary school level, but was severely constricted beyond that. In 1957, there were 1,250 million students in 26,000 primary schools, but only 20,000 students in 300 secondary schools, plus an additional 11,000 students in 340 technical schools. A paternalistic colonial plan had raised the educational level of a substantial portion of the population. At the same time, it was being monitored in an effort to prevent the formation of a small cadre of dominating indigenous elites at the top. Widespread development of secondary schools began in early 1950s (Merriam 1961:42). At the time of independence, however, there were only three people with post-graduate degrees.

Protestants in Kivu received a disproportionate amount of financial backing from the U.S. for the orphanage and school for mulatto children (established by Hurlburt, Sr). There was a growing resentment on the part of Africans over favouritism shown for these children, especially the English education that they received. With the disparity in levels of education being offered at most Baptist mission-sponsored schools and the school for mulatto children, as well as Catholic-sponsored schools, the issue of subsidies continued to percolate in the church. Graduates, having received school-leaving certificates after five years of study in Baptist mission schools found that, when they applied for jobs outside the mission, their credentials were not recognised. Many government clerical jobs were going to graduates of Catholic schools, as were jobs in mining firms, plantations, foreign firms, and the military; and the higher standard of living and legal privileges being afforded these people were becoming increasingly evident to members of the Baptist community. Such salaried clerical workers were beginning to form a significant new professional class in the colony known as the *evolués*. Having had the benefit of a secondary education, fluency in French, and experience working in clerical positions, these professionals enjoyed the status of a partially Europeanised class, operating above the rest of the population. There were a few members of the Baptist community who would have qualified for *evolué* status. However, the feeling that they had been left behind began to develop.

After independence, there was a rise in the political consciousness among the population at large. The volatile situation that existed in the Congo on the eve of independence, the rapid disintegration of central government authority after independence, and occupation of the country by UN troops are well known (Young 1965; Merriam 1961). What followed was five years of political instability not only on the national level, but also on the provincial and local levels. In the Kivu, the two groups of Protestants – the *progressists* (liberals) and traditionalists – were not only split but eventually engaged in a fratricidal struggle. In 1975, the

tensions had become a real war. That was when Monsignor Kataliko stepped in to reconcile the two camps. He conducted his remit so well that all the Baptists, ‘progressists’ and conservatives, have remained very grateful and respectful of the bishop. His successor, Monsignor Melchisedech Sikulu inherited the same sentiment of respect and gratitude from the Protestants, including the traders. The Catholic Church, therefore, plays a very interesting role in Nande’s social and political landscape.

While it continues to form part of transnational religion, with its hierarchy, missions, and objectives, the Catholic Church became increasingly implicated in the maintenance and negotiation of local political and developmental order during the troubled period of the civil war in the DRC. As we will see in the next chapter, the Catholic Church in Butembo remains constantly engaged in the condemnation of military violence and human rights abuse, notably through its Peace and Justice Commission. However, the Catholic Church in Butembo has evolved into a powerful national political actor, influencing military and political decisions. In March 2001, Butembo Bishop Melchisedech-initiated the International Peace Symposium during which participants asked for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the DRC and denounced the massacres and plundering of the Congo wealth. In 2003, when the Ugandan-backed rebel leader, Jean Pierre Bemba, tried to invade Butembo in an operation named *Effacer le Tableau*, Monsignor Sikulu with Dr Jackson Basikania, co-ordinator of the NGO *Programme d’Assistance aux Pygmées en RDC (PAR-RDC)* were the first to contact Agence France Press to accuse Bemba’s soldiers of horrific acts of violence and cannibalism, crimes committed especially during the occupation of Mambasa.¹⁶

According to ongoing conversations in Butembo, the current mayor of Butembo, Wabunga Zebede, was appointed by the bishop with the agreement of the traders. True or not, the fact remains that there seems to be a viable local organisation run by this triumvirate of church, traders and weak state officials.

The Church is a powerful piece of the puzzle in the Nande social organisation. Roman Catholic priests, more than their Protestant counterparts (pastors) constitute an active religious elite, but most of the time, they are in complicity with traders and, sometimes, at the expense of other post-colonial elites, particularly the customary and intellectual elites. There is a growing division between the social classes: peasants, workers, and underpaid educated professionals are now directing their frustration at traders whom they increasingly view as being exploitative. However, the way the capitalist class of traders deals with its hegemonic situation and how its efforts impact other classes has remains a critical issue in the development of the Nande community.

Another reason for the resentment of other elite groups against the Nande trust network is the feeling that they are being robbed of their social surplus.

Long-established forms of village politics are still at work in this urban arena, and this has tended to prevent even millionaires (in US dollars) from acting in ostentatious ways with their wealth. Instead, they either bank it elsewhere, invest it in their children's schooling (abroad), or more importantly, invest it locally in services from which potentially everyone may profit. These traditional constraints on elite formation are eventually being challenged by the trading elite.

One important exception to this traditional norm of modesty and discretion may be seen in the way traders organise the weddings of their children. In Butembo, weddings take place every week, but those involving traders' children are very different from others. Marriage in Nande tradition does not merely unite two individuals, but rather two families, if not two whole clans (Kakule 2003). The traders' children's weddings are different, not only because they exclusively join in marriage the children of rich families. There are predictably no intermarriages between the haves and the have nots.¹⁷ Families have the traditional right to choose a wife or a husband for their son or daughter. In the case of rich people, the family will choose a girl or a boy from another rich family. It is known in Butembo that the families of the bosses do not want to wed with poor families. It would be dangerous for business, I was routinely informed. One of my informants, who sometimes lived in Boston and whose father is among the richest in Butembo, told me that wedding somebody from a poor family would be like the Kennedys in the US marrying a common girl. Another example which shows that economic activities have a big impact on the community is the wedding of one rich man with his own cousin. Nande tradition is exogamic; men ordinarily take wives only from outside their own extended families. But because this man has demonstrated his capacity in the accumulation of wealth, he was able to violate tradition and marry his cousin.

Generally, weddings are the occasions for these usually discrete millionaires to expose their wealth and enhance their prestige among the general population. During my fieldwork, I was invited to two weddings involving the children of traders. On the afternoon of October 19, 2005, the room was full of guests. Over two thousand people were eating, laughing and smiling around the groom. Mr. Palos and Mr. Mbanga, two members of the G8, had two of their children engaged for life. The wedding was unlike anything ever seen in the city of Butembo. Each of the two thousand guests received as entree a box in which there was a piece of bread, cheese, ham, salad and French salad dressing. These boxes were imported from Kampala, and the content was ordered by the groom. A dozen guests came from London where John Mbanga lives. They were offered round-trip tickets to attend the celebrations. The wedding dresses were also imported from overseas. The couple was given two cars; each parent gave a car to his in-law. The whole city of 600,000 inhabitants (of which 60 per cent are under 18 years) seemed to be talking about this marriage. Such an exposition of

wealth was indeed very important for traders who were keen to uphold their position as an elite group around which the new Nande community was being constructed.

A second wedding on 26 November 2005, involving the children of traders, to which I was also invited, may be placed on the same register of wealth in order to claim not only a leadership position in the wider community, but also to send a message to other traders about their wealth. This wedding in Butembo joined two former students of Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow. The bride was the eldest daughter of the second richest man in Butembo. She had completed her Master's degree in management in Moscow. Her father owns three Russian made Antonov planes and two big hotels (in Beni and Butembo), and he is also building a third one in Kinshasa, the national capital. The groom was a medical doctor who had also studied in Moscow. His father is also a trader, but not as wealthy as his in-laws. An Antonov was sent to Kinshasa to bring to Butembo all the invited guests, including members of government. This was so far the biggest wedding ever seen in Butembo.

The growing cleavage between the haves and the have nots can be observed from any hilltop in Butembo. New villas are being constructed by the traders. In some places, a dozen of new constructions, each representing a value of half a million dollars may be noticed within a square kilometre. The Gallery Tsongo, belonging to the richest trader, reportedly cost US\$ 3 million. The total value of real estate in Butembo could be estimated between US\$20 and 35 million (Raeymaekers 2007:49). The real estate boom is a result of frustration with the pillaging mentality of the Mobutu government in the 1990s. In February 1993, for example, underpaid soldiers mutinied and destroyed all the business in Kinshasa, the capital city and in cities around the country. Because real estate is more difficult to pillage, traders have decided to safeguard their money in property, housing, hotels and guesthouses. The rise of the property market in Butembo illustrates how local economic activity is embedded in its social environment. There is no sign of the capital flight that is characteristic of many other development contexts: houses are constructed, and profits from trade are invested in the same environment where profits are generated. In fact, there is no legal system to protect the property market, but rather only an informal system of insurance and relationships that are fundamentally built on trust.

Conclusion

The chapter has shown that one of the most discontented social classes in Kivu is the salaried professionals and managers: schoolteachers, store clerks, school principals and other professionals I called intellectuals. Education is the recognised mode of entry into this class. But, as the promised rewards of such class positions remain elusive, a new, better-educated generation of professionals find themselves

a part of the most discontented class in the city. Another frustrated group is the so-called customary elite or the elders. Their influence is diminishing in favour of traders who have become the new power brokers. Frustrations are directed toward the successful traders who, despite their role in the development of the city, are seen as usurpers of the professional's or elder's prerogatives. Thus, for Nande traders to sustain their hegemony, their efforts to reach out to other classes will be critical to the development of the community in Butembo. It seems that the real decision-making power rests with the alliance of the Catholic Church, the traders' trust network and, as we will see in the next chapter, the coercive power of the militias. In fact, the question of protection of business is one of the most acute for the Nande trader network. In the next chapter, I will discuss how Nande trust network protects its business against inside and outside predators. This question of protection was paramount because even though the Nande region was quiet, the continuing inter-communal strife in Masisi in the south threatened insecurity.

Notes

1. Thompson, E.P. 1968, *The Making of English Working Class*, Harmondsworth.
2. See Greed and Grievance literature by Paul Collier et al.
3. Indian intellectuals, most of them educated in England, were at the heart of the struggle for independence in 1947. Educated "natives" represented a danger for the colonies.
4. "Evolved" in the Congolese colonial language meant a black man who was educated enough to share some degree of European life style with the colonialists. Indeed as Mutamba puts it, at the time, even an uneducated white was indeed socially superior to the "évolué." See Mutamba M. "Du Congo-Belge au Zaïre: Emergence des évolués et genèse du nationalisme (1940-1960)", Doctoral dissertation, Ecole des Hautes Etudes de Sciences Sociale, Paris 1978.
5. Kita K.M. 1982, *Colonisation et Enseignement. Cas du Zaïre avant 1960*. CERUKI, Bukavu.
6. Gilon L., 1988, *Servir en actes et en verité*. Editions Duculot-Gembloux.
7. As I said earlier, there are five different Nande clans including the *Banyisanza*, *Basbu*, *Baswagha*, *Batangi* and *Bamate*. Each clan has its territorial centre. The hierarchy goes from *Mwami* to *Mukondi*, to *Mukulu*, and finally the *Musoki*, the lowest level of authority. The *engemo* or tribute paid by the small farmers go from the *musoki* who receives it to the *mwami* throughout the upward hierarchy. (see Raemaekers, op. cit. p.96).
8. Op.cit. p. 89. See also J.B. Mapantano, 1994-1995.
9. Mamdani (1996) discusses decentralised despotism of rural chiefs.
10. In Nande Culture the "Mwami" is the first custodian of traditions. He is the earthly member of the by-gone ancestors. See Kisom Livulirwa Murughunya, "Erisinga Ou 'pouvoir sacré' chez les peuple nande." Memoire de diplome en anthropology socio-culturelle, Universite catholique de Louvain, Decembre 1992.

11. In the month of September 2005, for example, 4 airplanes crashed killing 25 people. Almost all of these planes were forbidden to fly European airspaces. See http://www.aeroweb-fr.net/actualites/03-2006_liste-noire-compagnies-aeriennes.php. One trader told me that it was cheaper to buy an old Antonov or a Tupolevs than a new Mercedes Benz.
12. Interview with Ndivito, president of FEC.
13. Interviews in Butembo. Many versions of the story circulate in the region including the one from the Kinshasa daily newspaper, *Le Potentiel*, I am reproducing in the text.
14. The English translation is from Raeymaekers 2007, 141.
15. Much of this discussion is borrowed from Jack Nelson's (1982) *Christian missionising and social transformation: a history of change and conflict in Eastern Zaire*, New York: Praeger.
16. On the accusation of cannibalism by the Bishop of Butembo, see Johan Pottier, "Rights violations, rumour, and rhetoric: making sense of cannibalism in Mambasa, Ituri (Democratic Republic of Congo)", in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* N.13, 825-843, 2007.
17. The image used in Butembo is to "have a name", meaning to be known because of the wealth one controls. All traders have a name. Poor people do "not have a name."

8

Gold and Guns: Protecting Capitalist Investment during Social Fragmentation and Violence

Hitherto, this book has sought to uphold the proposition that even in apparently chaotic situations of civil war and state disintegration, some sense of social order and economic prosperity may be maintained, and that new forms of life may be produced that will shape the process of state (re-)formation. The state itself remains relevant but in competition with other forms of social organisation and non-state agencies with enormous decision-making power. The main theoretical consequence of this is that the notion of sovereignty can now be uncoupled from state sovereignty. A genealogy of state formation shows that there is nothing necessary about the development of nation-statehood. The history of the rise and fall of regimes in Africa is a history rooted in conflict and contingency. Put differently, there is no general formula for the success of state projects; they always have to respond to local historical specificities, i.e. the conditions and relations of struggle, which may oblige the state to share its prerogatives with parallel or rival organisations claiming authority over certain domains of governance, be it the Sicilian Mafia, the Catholic Church or transnational trading networks. Indeed, the spatial premises of various conventional presuppositions about the state and society, and the inevitably territorial orientation of various projects of state power, require that constructions of society always be made in the state's image, specifically the particular extent to which a state effectively imposes itself. Such a capacity is itself likely to be locally differentiated and uneven. Hence, one must be cognizant of an unrelenting articulation of the State to a multiplicity of local particularities and the historical specificity of these relations, as social relations of struggle.

However, the notion of the local should not be romanticised. It does not refer either to the authentic or the pure, and even less to a social periphery

somehow outside the purview of state institutions (Hannerz 2003). It does not even need to be defined territorially. It may be a physical space, but also an arena where the global, and what has been local elsewhere can also become a local “here and now” (Hannerz 2003: my emphasis). The local is to be understood as an arena where various political and economic influences intersect, “where order and disorder are constructed and deconstructed, and where layers of sovereignties intersect, converge or diverge” (Kassimir 2001). That is to say, “the local” refers to sites where a plurality of sovereignties contends and must be articulated to one another. This book has shown that social transformation did occur beyond the reach of the central state during times of political instability and even military conflicts. However, the problem of administering security, i.e., the struggle to achieve a monopoly of violence, remains paramount in the local arena, especially when an important degree of local capitalist accumulation exists. The question then is: how do local capitalists protect their businesses in a virtually stateless situation?

This chapter will describe the ways Nande traders have created the equivalent of political institutions to defend their commerce while the Congolese state has effectively vanished leaving numerous armed rebel groups to contend for territorial control. The primary aim is to understand how Nande traders reacted to the political disruption characterised by the social fragmentation and violence in the DRC.

The Congo Wars

A close look at the origins of the Congo wars leads inevitably to a consideration of two phenomena: the question of land ownership and the political manipulation of citizenship, where the citizenship of the Congolese of Rwandan origin has been switched on and off as expediency dictated (Jackson 2007). Land and citizenship are of paramount importance because traditionally both have been the basis for social stratification. Historically, ethnic affiliation automatically conferred rights to the land. At the same time, the possession of land defined one’s status within a community. Thus, the so-called non-indigenous communities were excluded from equal access to land. The Zairian land reform beginning from the late 1960s laid the foundation for endemic political competition, particularly in the Kivus. Restrictions on citizenship eligibility for Congolese of Rwandan and Burundian heritage (including the Banyamulenge¹) were directly related to the land question. Over more than 40 years since independence, the citizenship of these “Rwandophone” minorities has been switched on and off as expediency dictated by the political claims of so-called autochthons for land allocation and other vital entitlements.

Causes of Wars: Land and Nationality

The moment the Zairian state proclaimed that all land belonged to the state in the proclamation of the famous Bakajika law in 1973, land lost its customary identity and, paradoxically, became commercialised. Since the land, according to the new law, belonged to the state, all customary transactions regarding land became illegal. As Vlassenroot (2003) puts it, the Bakajika law was indeed a political instrument in the hands of the rural capitalist elite because they were able to buy land from the government administration and expropriate the landless farmers. Here, we have an instance of something resembling Marx's primitive accumulation, facilitated by the state but without the compensatory proletarian phase. Pottier (2003) argues that there is a clear link between conflict in the DRC and the land question. Access to land was the reason for the first outburst of violence in the Masisi region and has remained the driving force of the Congolese conflict ever since. Indeed, land was traditionally a common good in the sense that it was regulated by customary law based on communal territorial ownership. The 1993 land reform completely disrupted the traditional modes of social stratification of various communities in the Kivus. The wealthy in the region bought land, putting hundreds of landless farmers on the street. The latter became easy targets for recruitment by local strongmen who, along with thousands of unemployed youth and children, formed the ranks of the first turmoil that erupted from the early 1990s onward. During his military campaign in 1996 toward Kinshasa, the then rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, relied upon the *kadogo* (children) and landless farmers.

The large-scale expropriation of land made possible by the Bakajika law had the effect of benefiting the rural capitalist class who were able to use their connections to the public administration. Many Nande traders similarly bought property titles during this period, thus further shrinking the land available for use by peasants and farmers. According to Raeymaekers (2007), traders bought extensive vacant lands during the 1980s and the 1990s with the complicity of corrupt administrators or customary chiefs. These deals were made possible because of an incessant reinterpretation of the existing legislative conventions through bribery. The main consequence was the shifting of ownership from the communal peasantry to the rural capitalists, leading to a complete reconfiguration of the existing relations of production.

In 2000, a trader in Butembo acquired a large portion of fertile land at Masereka by corrupting the administrative authorities in Goma. The trader is from the same region, and knows that people had been using the land for at least three decades. That notwithstanding, he acquired the land title and thus became the legal owner, though he did not have the courage to chase people off of the land. It was only in 2006 that his older son finally initiated action through the

justice department of the province to evict all the occupants of his land. The eviction was resisted in the beginning, but in the end, police burned villages and people were put off the land which they had cultivated for decades. In an interview with the son, who is still a student of business management in London, he told me that his father was unable to execute the eviction order because he had many roots in the community. Since the son did not grow up in the area, he could carry out the eviction order. On what he thinks of the relationship that bound his family to the now landless community, he replied that he was not concerned about it. This eviction, carried out with the heavy hand of armed violence, has created a big tension between the evicted community and the family of this trader. As a result, many young men from this community have joined militia groups affiliated with other traders in Butembo and the surrounding area.

As Raeymaekers (2007: 98) puts it, “rather than contributing to a peasant uprising, the Bakajika land reform precipitated a rapid transformation of customary property right systems to the advantage of rural ‘capitalists’, who used their connections to the state and non-state institutions to secure their accumulated property and transform it into capital, eventually”. Yet, as I have suggested, the land question is intimately connected to the emergence of a large number of restless unemployed youth, ready to join militia groups.

The Bakajika law did not wipe away completely the customary land legislation that maintained its relevance as a signifier of ethnic belonging, however. Instead, it created a kind of dual system of land property. Peasants were confused and the dominant economic elites took advantage of this confusion to appropriate land from one system or the other, according to whatever suited them. This period saw the emergence of the class of rural entrepreneurs. According to Tsongo (1994), three quarters of the land liberated by the state in the region of Luoto was promptly bought by local entrepreneurs. Also in the Nande region, agricultural surplus produced on the acquired land was used to impel developing trade enterprises; value-added from land was invested in transport, trade and construction rather than pastoral investment, as people did in Masisi or Ituri (Vlassenroot 2002; Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2004).

In Masisi in particular, competition over land turned led to the affirmation of citizenship because land was regarded as ethnic belonging and immigrants from neighbouring countries like Rwanda, and to a lesser extent Burundi, were excluded from ownership. But, with the Bakajika law that liberated land from the customary legislation to ostensibly make it state property, many immigrants, especially the Banyamulenge (the Congolese Tutsi of Rwandan heritage) managed to buy and occupy large portions of land. In the 1990s, for example, 90 per cent of land in the Masisi and the Rutsuru area was occupied respectively by Banyamulenge (Vlassenroot 2003) and the Banyarwanda.²

The Banyarwanda

The primary occupants of the Rutshuru zone in the south of the Nande territories of Luberi and Beni have generally been referred to as Banyarwanda (the people of Rwanda). Most of them are ethnically related to the Hutu people who occupy most of Rwanda, though some Tutsi (the people who ruled in Rwanda during the pre-colonial period) were included among them. Kinyarwanda-speaking people in the northern and western regions of Rutshuru zone, many of whom were transferred from heavily populated Rwanda during the colonial period, refer to themselves these days as Banyabwita, Bwita being the name of the collectivity of that area. The name Banyarwanda is in decline because of the charges made by other groups that these people are in fact, simply, Rwandans. The region remained unassimilated into the Tutsi-dominated kingdom of Rwanda. There was only one Tutsi chief in the Jomba Valley area in Congo at the time of colonial occupation. The, tribute payments to Tutsi rulers, were probably very much an exception at the time (Vansina 1962; Newbury 1988). Furthermore, the Beheko cult, a variation of the Nyavingi cult, was a very prominent part of the religious ideology that dominated Jomba Valley during this period. It was a cult that arose “primarily in areas without complex political organisations, and if it had had any function at all, it had been to provide an ideology of authority for an incipient political organisation, where none existed before” (Freedman 1974: 170). This means that if one adopts the distinction between what could be termed ethnic citizenship, (which is concerned with obligation and right at the local level between the individuals and customary authority with implication for land allocation [Mamdani 1996, 2001]), and what Greenhouse (1999) calls empirical citizenship (the ethically vital, sense of belonging and security for individuals within society as a whole) – then the Banyarwanda are empirical citizens and not ethnic ones. In fact, recent historiography shows that before the arrival of colonialism, an important number of Kinyarwanda speakers already resided in what would become the Congo (Newbury 1993, 1999; Jackson 2007).

Pressures at the centre of the Rwandan kingdom, with more people having to be co-opted into the ruling class to maintain Tutsi dominance and, in turn, creating greater demands for tribute payments to sustain the ruling class, led to extensive expansion campaigns during the late half of the nineteenth century. These campaigns reached down into the southern Kivu region, as well as to the North, as far as Lake Edward (Vansina 1962: 88; Newbury 1988). Occasional raiding by Rwandans extended even further north, up to south and central Nande areas, and one Tutsi chief, Karakwenzi, fled Ndorwa, in Rwanda, under military pressure from King Rwabugiri and settled in the Semliki Valley north of Lake Edward. Having received firearms from Arab ivory hunters and, possibly from a British ivory hunter, Charles Stokes, Karakegenzi raided in the Semliki extensively.

He succeeded in setting up a system of political control before pushing into the Mitumba Mountains, gaining control over the territory around Maseki (Packard 1981: 138).

When the current borders of the modern Congo were drawn in the colonial period, they also incorporated territories abutting Rwanda around Rutshuru in today's North Kivu that were strongly Hutu in composition. Pockets of Tutsi pastoralists later settled in the rich upland of Masisi in north Kivu. Subsequent layers of migration further amplified and confused these original populations (Jackson 2007). Around the 1930s and 1950s, the Belgian administration deliberately transplanted both Hutu and Tutsi from Rwanda to the Congo under the "*Mission d'Immigration des Banyarwanda*" to alleviate the demographic pressure in famine-prone parts of Rwanda and to meet the expanding demand of labour force for plantation and mining. An estimated 85,000 Rwandans were moved to Masisi, North Kivu over this period (Jackson 2007). As we shall see, given the confusing and layered set of migrations and the swirling violence amidst which much of it took place, it is not surprising that these broad lines of history remain strongly contested to this day.

In an effort to avoid being assimilated to the Rwandan category, a group living on the hills of Mulenge in the Masisi adopted the name of "Banyamulenge" in the 1960s and 1970s. One of the reasons for the name change was to underline their long-term presence and distinguish themselves from more recent arrivals from postcolonial Rwanda (Ruhimbika 2001, Mamdani 2001, Jackson 2007). That strategy has backfired because, since no ethnic group was known in the region as Mulenge, native Congolese from the Masisi area protested vehemently and accused the Banyamulenge of "counterfeit identity" and, therefore, "doubtful nationality" (Jackson 2007).³

To understand this question of citizenship one has to go back to the independence of the Congo from Belgium in 1960. After Cold War machinations ensured the assassination of Lumumba, and his replacement by his chief of staff, the former journalist and CIA-informer Joseph Desire Mobutu, the question of how to retain power was very much in the new president's mind. Mobutu's strategy was to build a powerbase constituted by representatives of ethnic groups that could not threaten him "because of their weakness and the ambiguity of their social status" (Willame, 1997; Jackson 2007). Mobutu chose to work with Congolese Tutsi who posed the least threat to his power. He named Bartelemy Bisengimana, as his chief of staff in 1972. Indeed, in 1977, Bisengimana used his position to pass into law measures intended to give collective citizenship to all immigrants of Rwandan origin, inasmuch as the Zairian constitution of Lulwaburg (1964) had put into a kind of limbo the "nationality" of various immigrant groups from Rwanda. The 1964 Constitution stipulated in its Article 4:

There exists only one, sole, Congolese nationality. It is granted, beginning from the date of June 30, 1960 to all persons having now, or at some point in the past, as one of their ancestors a member of a tribe or the part of a tribe established on the territory of the Congo before October 18, 1908 [the date the Congo Free State became formally Belgium-Congo, a Belgian colony].

According to the 1964 Constitution, it is only when the Congo became a Belgian colony that it truly came into being as an independent entity. Some Kinyarwanda-speaking people had already settled in the Congo *before* that date, but a significant number of them migrated in the 1930s and then again in 1959, during the Hutu-led revolution in Rwanda. Under the Lulwabourg Constitution, the claims to Congolese citizenship of those more recent arrivals were, at best, doubtful. Though some legal interpreters of the constitution, sympathetic to Kinyarwanda speakers, argued that even later migrants have valid claims since, as either Hutu or Tutsi, they are members of tribes already established in Congolese national territory before 1908 even if their direct ancestors were not (Ndeshyo 1992). Nonetheless, it was largely against these migrants of Rwandan origin that Kivu's political leaders began to deploy the divisive conflation of ethnicity and foreignness. Bisengimana used his position as the President's chief of staff to impose the 1971 law according to nationality in Masisi, in North Kivu, to persons originating from Rwanda-Burundi, established in the Congo since June 30, 1960. By choosing the date of Independence June 30, 1960 rather than 1908, Bisengimana made sure that many more Kinyarwanda speakers would be granted the possibility of nationality than might have previously been the case. This law was "justified by the repetition of controversies and ill treatment toward that population."⁴ "These actions by Bisengimana were deeply resented by Congolese on both ethnic and legal grounds. Local traditional leaders were increasingly upset by the manipulation of nationality which could make it difficult to protect communal land. Lawyers argued that the new law was "particular" and "partisan" when the basis for nationality should be "impersonal, general, and universal" (Congolese human rights lawyer, quoted in Jackson 2007).

By the early 1970s, attempts were already being made to deny the Rwandophone of their Congolese citizenship. An early case concerned the introduction of national identity cards. In 1973, the person in charge of the South Kivu district sought clarification from the Provincial Governor as to whether "the Zairians of Rwandan heritage inhabiting the village of Bijombo are subject to the [recent] measure denying them identity cards" (Ruhimbika 2001). In fact, although Rwandophones enjoyed the fruits of formal citizenship during the 1970s, their situation remained unpredictable. In 1977, Bisengimana was charged for irregularities in the management of SOTEXKI, a Kisangani textile factory, and was dismissed as Mobutu's chief of staff. With Bisengimana out of the way,

Mobutu's new strongman, Anzuluni Bembe, a Bembe from Kivu, pushed for a second legislative look at the law on Rwandophone nationality. In 1981, the parliament voted to annul the 1972 law and reverted to the original *jus sanguinis* principle in the Constitution: a blood relationship to the Congolese people (Jackson 2007).

In 1981, the uncertainty and climate of political insecurity created by the question of citizenship prompted the emergence of rural militias to defend communal land ownership. These so called self-defence groups started attacking Rwandan communities in the Masisi, where they claimed the lives of almost 10,000 people and displaced 200,000 more (Raeymaekers 2007). Kinyarwanda speaking habitants of the Kivus were alarmed by the parliamentary annulment of the 1972 law, and in 1981, a group calling itself "Peoples of Rwandan Origin in Zaire" wrote to the UN Secretary-General seeking authorisation to "create a separate and independent state in North Kivu" (Willame 1997). During the 1980s, the tension continued to mount. Though there were only isolated cases of violence or forced repatriation to Rwanda or Burundi, Rwandophone elites withdrew from active politics, concentrating instead on economic pursuits particularly on vast agricultural concessions – coffee plantations and cattle ranches – already amassed under Bisengimana's patronage. Land alienation, in turn, fuelled growing anti-Rwandophone (and specifically anti-Tutsi) resentment (Zex-Kongo 1999). As Jackson (2007) puts it, geopolitics abetted the further marginalisation of the Kinyarwanda speakers. They were dismissed as not qualified to represent the "indigenous" interests of people from the Kivus. So, no Rwandophones participated in the Conference Nationale Souveraine (CNS) in 1991, which brought together government, opposition and civil society to deliberate upon the future of the country (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002).

Throughout the CNS, the North Kivu delegation used its platform to ramp up anti-Rwandophone sentiments, denouncing the political economic exploitation of the province by Rwandan foreigners. At the conclusion of the conference, a special sub-commission appointed to look at the nationality question returned a report marking a categorical distinction between four separate categories of Rwandophones: (i) autochthons from before 1885; (ii) transplantees; (iii) refugees; (iv) clandestines. The sub-commission proposed that the Transitional Government to emerge from CNS should conduct a census to distinguish these populations from each other – with the first being the only category recognised as meriting Congolese nationality. In the Kivus, this was received as notice of intention for ethnic cleansing. Over the following two years, there was a proliferation of militias on all side. A year later, just when a census was about to begin, inter-ethnic violence exploded in North Kivu and was intimately connected to the Burundian coup and massacre of 1993 and the Rwanda genocide of 1994, setting the stage for the two Congo wars that followed in 1996, and 1998, when the country was renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

During this inter-communal violence (which was concentrated further south), the Nande of Beni and Butembo remained largely aloof from these conflicts. However, some Nande politicians did play an active role in manipulating this ethnic violence. In 1990, a North Kivu coalition of Nande, Hunde, and Nyanga initiated a political campaign to exclude the Kinyarwanda speakers from participating in political activities. The conflict in the Masisi started after the Governor of North Kivu, in a speech in 1993, encouraged the Zairian security forces to support the effort of the Nande, Hunde and Nyanga to “exclude and exterminate” the “immigrants” from Rwanda (Vlassenroot 2002). The governor was a Nande and had the active support of close allies of the Mobutu administration; he actively cooperated with other provincial leaders to mobilise and direct local militias towards the objective of an overt campaign of extermination (Mararo 1998). During these 1993 attacks, local Mai Mai were reportedly assisted by Nande group descending from the Rwenzori Mountains.

The Rebellions

Other immigrants from Rwanda were similarly attacked by local people in the North Kivu province with the support of Mobutu and his associates. “Even the Kinshasa government joined the looting in 1996, supporting the decree that stripped Zairian citizenship from people of Rwandan Tutsi ancestry (*Banyamulenge*) and directed them to give up their property” (Reno 1998:160). As Emizat (2000:166) rightly explains, even though land rights and traditional authority are major causes of ethnic conflict in Kivu, the economic success of the *Banyarwanda* frustrated local groups and created a sense of displacement and loss that led to active hatred and a hunt for scapegoats.

Mobutu had used a divide-and-rule policy to play the ethnic card in the Kivu region, siding with a minority group at the expense of the rest, according to circumstance and an opportunistic calculus. From 1970 until the early 1980s, Mobutu fairly consistently sided with *Banyarwanda* against local groups contesting his authority. After Bisengimana fell from grace, Kivu politicians lobbied in parliament to pass the law of 29 June 1981, which explicitly nullified the citizenship rights of the *Banyarwanda* in Kivu. Mobutu’s new disposition against the *Banyarwanda* was dictated by the political advantage he could now reap from the conflict – the political support of the Kivu region that had always strongly opposed his rule.

Mobutu’s divide-and-rule strategy perhaps became less relevant in Zaire as his control over resources diminished. Following the 1994 Rwandan genocide, more than 2 million Rwandan Hutus fled into Zaire to escape retaliation by the now Tutsi-led government in Rwanda. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) established refugee camps to protect and feed these refugees and huge amounts of dollars were flowing in the region. These sudden

developments in the region in 1995 gave Mobutu access to new, cross-border sources of wealth and also fuelled new alliances that buttressed warlord politics among his associates and rivals alike. Illicit diamond dealing formed a cornerstone of Zaire's warlord political economy. It helped Mobutu to finance the arming of extremists among Rwandan Hutu refugees in 1996, to influence both rival and loyal commercial networks, and to consolidate ties to associated foreign commercial networks (Reno 1998). None of the countries Mobutu destabilized - Rwanda in this case - challenged him in the name of Zaire's sovereignty. However, when such states' sovereignty deteriorated, these issues came to the forefront and with new commodity chains and pathways of capital accumulation, new patterns of recognition developed.

Beginning in 1990, Rwanda was undergoing an extreme social and political crisis. The economy was declining at an unprecedented pace. Then, in 1996, the North of the country was invaded by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi-dominated rebellion coming from Kampala and advancing toward Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, to topple the Hutu-government militarily. One of the reasons for this invasion of Rwanda by Tutsi exiles from Uganda is that Tutsi people in Uganda had been recently disenfranchised after more than three decades of exile in that country (Mamdani 2001). The Rwandan government's response to the Tutsi RPF's challenge was to begin its genocidal campaign against Tutsi inside the country.⁵

As the RPF attacks intensified, so did the killing of Tutsi in Rwanda by governmental forces. The apex of the killing occurred between April and June 1994, just after the plane carrying Habyarimana⁶ from peace negotiations in Arusha (Tanzania) was downed in early April 1994. The two month massacre, justifiably characterised as genocide, is estimated to have taken the lives of between 200,000 and 1 million Tutsi and moderate Hutu⁷ (Emizet, 2000 : 165).

In late 1994, many Hutu people fled to Congo to escape the prospect of retaliation from the Tutsi government who seized state power in June 1994 and thereby halted the genocide (Mamdani 2001; Melvern 2000; Prunier 1995). According to Emizet, the number of Hutu who entered Zaire in the aftermath of genocide was between 1.1 and 1.25 million refugees including 20 to 25,000 soldiers (of the Rwandan armed forces, FAR), and 30 to 40,000 Hutu militiamen (*Interhamwe* and *Impuzamugabi*) who had been responsible for perpetrating the genocide (Emizet 2000:165).

Rulers in neighbouring states who faced the cross-border effects of Mobutu's alliances with clandestine networks were frustrated. For example, Mobutu's partnership and arms deals with extremist Hutu exiles (FAR, *Interhamwe* or *Impuzamugabi*), beginning in 1994, posed a security threat to the new Rwandan regime. He also continued dealing in diamonds with the UNITA rebels in Angola.

Ugandan rebels, called the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) similarly received supplies from Sudan through the Bunia Airport in Zaire. Forces organised by Mobutu's allies in Kivu mobilised people to attack Zairians of Rwandan Tutsi origin, which eased Mobutu's task of recruiting local supporters among Hutu refugees who fled Rwanda in 1994. The regime promptly allowed these pro-Mobutu insider – outsiders to vote in elections scheduled for May 1997.⁸

The Hutu newcomers launched attacks on the Congolese Tutsi of Rwandan origin with the help of local ethnic groups, who used the opportunity to settle their old scores with the Banyamulenge. The 28 April 1995 Resolution adopted by the Transitional Parliament had stripped the latter ethnic group of their Congolese nationality. Consequently, and in the immediate aftermath of the genocide, they were asked to leave the Congo and return to Rwanda. The Banyamulenge refused to leave and turned to the new Tutsi-led Rwandan government for help. This call for help suited the purposes of the Rwandan government, dealing with the repeated incursions of Hutu militias into Northern Rwanda. The Rwandan government felt it could solve this dual security problem by invading the Congo (Emizet 2000).

In September 1996, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) and armed Banyamulenge elements attacked Mobutu's army and his Hutu supporters (*Interhamwe* militia) in the South Kivu. On 18 October, the fighting intensified around the Uvira refugee camps. One week later, several anti-Mobutu groups joined the Banyamulenge-led rebellion in order to oust Mobutu. Uganda, Burundi and Angola later joined the rebel movement intended to oust Mobutu. These neighbouring states all wanted to remove Mobutu in order to secure their own borders with Congo. This led to Kabila's takeover and the subsequent "second Rwandan genocide" of more than 235,000 Hutu in the eastern Congo and the northern town of Mbandaka (Emizet 2000:177).

On 29 October 1996, in response to ongoing attacks originating from refugee camps, the renamed RPA entered Congo to disperse refugees from the camps and to capture and kill all those responsible for the genocide – a campaign that had great success (Nest 2006). President Museveni of Uganda was keen to see Mobutu overthrown because the Lord's Resistance Army, an armed opposition to the Ugandan regime had found a safe haven in the Congo. The RPA and the Ugandan army put in place the Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la liberation du Congo-Zaire (AFDL), which led a campaign against Hutu Militias and the Zairian troops that got in the way (De Villers, Willame, Omasombo and Kennes 1998). Members of Congolese Rwandan speaking groups, especially the Banyamulenge, constituted the core of the AFDL. As the campaign achieved great success, members of other groups joined. Among the latter was the group led by Laurent-Desire Kabila, who later was chosen to be the head of AFDL to give a Congolese credibility to the foreign invasion. Kabila, a member of the

Baluba tribe of the Southwest Katanga province, was an old opponent to the Mobutu regime. Very quickly, the campaign gained external support from the Angolan government, which held a long-standing grievance against Mobutu because he had allowed UNITA forces to operate bases in the Congo. Those bases were functioning as a conduit for weapons and diamonds and helped to sustain UNITA in its war against the government of Jos Santos, in Angola.

AFDL did not meet strong resistance to its attacks on the Hutu refugee camps in the frontier regions of Goma and Bukavu. Zairian soldiers deserted their positions during the first days of the attacks. After an eight-month campaign, the AFDL forces entered Kinshasa on 17 May 1997; Mobutu had fled Kinshasa on 16 May 1997 (later to die in exile in Morocco in September 2007). Then, Laurent Kabila declared himself president of the now renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Nande and the AFDL

The *Simba* from Manguredjipa, the *Babandule* from the Rwenzori and *Kasindiens* from Kasindi – all Nande militia groups – were mobilised by Nande traditional chiefs to fight against Kinyarwanda speaking pastoralist groups in the Masisi area in early 1993. The purported reason for this conflict was to “defend” the Nande against the alleged expansionist ambitions of Congolese Tutsi, who were beginning to acquire land in the Nande frontier region of Lubero. These militia, also known as *Mayi Mayi* or self-defence movements, played the role of hardening the Nande *ethnic* frontier, and thus helped to draw a clear line of division between them and the AFDL rebellion (Raeymaekers 2007). Because of the strong presence of Congolese Tutsi in the AFDL, the Nande remained outside of Kabila’s campaign (Marar 1998). Beginning in February 1998, when local *Mayi Mayi*, at the instigation of Nande traders, proclaimed the autonomy of Butembo vis-à-vis the Tutsi dominated AFDL movement, Kabila sent in troops which brutally repressed the *Mayi Mayi* and burned houses in Butembo and its surroundings. Predictably, this repression escalated the situation. The Catholic Church, traders, and other members of Nande civil society in Butembo became increasingly and visibly supportive of the *Mayi Mayi* fighting against the Tutsi elements within the AFDL government. As a result of this tension, Nande ethnic boundaries became more and more hermetic vis-à-vis the neighbouring communities, especially the Kinyarwanda speakers. As in the rest of Eastern Congo, the *Mayi Mayi* (largely comprised of youth who used the wars in order to pursue social and economic gain) were thus considered liberators, and guardians of tradition against the Tutsi occupying oppressors (Jackson 2001; Raeymaekers 2007). As the conflict escalated in Eastern Congo, this mythology flourished even as the Nande entrepreneurs and their junior partners, the militias, continued to take advantage of the local peasantry.

The Second War

Various promises that had been made to different stakeholders in the anti-Mobutu campaign of 1996 were rapidly supplanted by the autocratic and eccentric style of government under Kabila, reminiscent of the old days of Mobutu. As Moore (2001) puts it, the neo-Mobutist dictatorship of Laurent Kabila transformed the world's most attractive mineral market into a buccaneer industry, enriching himself and his family network at the expense of the Congolese people. Thus, many Congolese were deeply dissatisfied by the pace and extent of the government's promised economic and political reforms. Furthermore, Kabila's relations with his foreign allies – Rwandans and Ugandans – were also decisive. Because he did not have a significant base of support in the Congo, Kabila had to rely on a continued Rwandan and Ugandan military presence. He was readily portrayed as a Rwandan and Ugandan puppet. In the end, Kabila was forced to distance himself from his allies. Thus, on 2 August 1998, the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD), a rebel group created by the Rwandans, launched an offensive against the Kabila government with the aim of occupying Kinshasa and removing Kabila from power.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC), an organisation the DRC joined in 1997, sent troops to defend the Kabila regime. Thus, Zimbabwe and Angola entered the war on 20 August 1998 and defeated the rebel forces and the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) troops advancing on Kinshasa (Nest 2006). However, from their strongholds in the Eastern DRC, Rwandan and Ugandan forces advanced westward toward the diamond fields of East Kasai and South toward the copper mines of Katanga. At the same time, a new rebel movement – *Mouvement pour la Liberation du Congo (MLC)* – advanced west and south along the Congo River toward Kinshasa from its strongholds in the Equator Province. Headed by Mobutu's son-in-law, Jean-Pierre Bemba, the MLC was a creation of the Ugandan government, and was run by wealthy private entrepreneurs and some former high-ranking figures from the Mobutu era.

Many neighbouring countries joined the war on both sides. On one side, troops from Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad, Eritrea, and Sudan came to the aid of Kabila government's troops. Two Burundian rebel groups fighting the Tutsi-dominated regime in Burundi also allied themselves with the Congolese government. The Nande Mayi Mayi, in addition to the Hutu Interhamwe and ex-FAR forces, joined the Force Democratic de Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR), which was formed by the exiled Rwandans in 2000 with the objective of overthrowing the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan government, and they also rallied to the side of the Kabila government against the Rwandan army.

On the rebel side, the main Congolese groups were the RCD and the MLC. Both groups sought a share of state power. These rebel groups were militarily

and organisationally linked to Rwanda and Uganda. As Lemarchand (2001) puts it, with the RCD rebellion, the question of the Kivus seemed to return “with a vengeance” on Congo’s political scene; not in the form of any political participation by its population, but through the rapid proliferation of several armed bands with various origins and sources of support. As alliances changed hands, and yesterday’s friends became tomorrow’s enemies (Willame 1999), the war brought about a complex and highly unpredictable climate in which the use of violence for political and economic gain expanded dramatically. Relations within rebel groups and between them and their foreign backers were constantly fractious. In 1999, fighting broke out between the Rwandan and Ugandan armies over who should lead the RDC, resulting in the group splitting into two factions: RCD-Goma and RCD-ML (Movement of Liberation).

Nande Traders and the Rebellions

In the 1980s, the informalisation of trade relationships was in part motivated by a reaction against Mobutu’s predatory patrimonial system; in 1998, the rapprochement of Butembo’s traders with the new political forces was based on a conscious estimation of their increased benefits. When the war started in August 1998, many Nande traders left Butembo in order to secure their business. Their decision to return was motivated by the invitation of the rebels. As Ndivito, the president of FEC puts it, “the combination of economic crisis and political insecurity left us little choice but to collaborate directly with the rebellion to ensure local security.” But, as we will see, Nande traders did not only co-operate with the rebel movements, but they turned out to play a vital role as creditors and clients of the rebels. Since most of the rebel movements had big financial needs, they sought to borrow money from the traders. These debts were paid back through tax exoneration and suppression of customs services for goods transported across borders. At the beginning, this practice was said to be exceptional by rebel leaders, but it ended up becoming generalised. Eventually, traders themselves started to propose pre-financing rebel movements. The traders were the big winners, as they imposed interest rates of up to 50 per cent. Since the rebels could never pay back their loans, traders were simply allowed to transport their merchandise in and out of the country free of charge.

In a memorandum from the rebel movement, Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), dated 22 September 1998, one reads: “To meet the urgent priority of the army, the authorities in charge of finance have asked any trader in the region [for] an amount of \$900,000. This amount is an equivalent of the customs service fees of 50 containers of clothes. The money has to be given in US dollars” (Kambale Mirembe 2004). Evidently, the strategy of the traders was to co-operate with rebel movements in order to secure their business. In a letter of 2 July 2001, the president of the Federation of Entrepreneurs of Congo in Butembo (FEC)

wrote: “Despite a very difficult environment, traders from Butembo have responded positively to many solicitations from the new political power by pre-financing its activities” (Kambale Mirembe 2004). Thus, Nande traders plainly took advantage of rebellions in North Kivu to increase their productivity by over-billing rebel leaders who granted them tax and customs service exoneration. Nonetheless, in general terms, insecurity had a very bad effect on trade in the region. Some traders had to discontinue their business in other regions of the country such as Kisangani, Isiro, Ituri, etc., simply to protect their lives. Similarly, clients from other parts of the country could not make the trip to Butembo. The general populace saw a severe decline in their purchasing power, due to insecurity. Moreover, uncontrolled Mayi Mayi groups pillaged some farms.

Despite the fact that traders in Butembo were sufficiently wise to protect their business against the political disruption and made tremendous gains from the opportunities that war offered to them, it remains true that the environment of generalised insecurity created by the violence made it very difficult for them to carry on their business inside the country. In 1999, during a meeting, the Vice-governor of North Kivu, Kaysavira Mbake, who was also in charge of the rebel's economic affairs, met with Nande businessmen and announced that from taxes on imports would be substantially lowered, and that the import duties would be fixed and no longer determined according to the value of merchandise (Raeymaekers 2007). The table below shows the difference between taxation regimes before the 1998 rebellion and thereafter.

Table 6: Tax Regimes for Imports

Nature of goods	Estimated Value \$	Regime L.D. Kabila(1996-1997) \$	Regime RCD-ML(1999-2003) \$
CNR 20' printed cloth	63,000	22,428 or 35.6%	8,000
CNR 20' various goods (Indonesia, Thailand)	40,000	14,240 or 35.6%	4,000
CNR 20' various goods (UAE, China)	20,000-30,000	4,800 -10,680 or 24-35.6%	3,000
CNR 20' textile	12,500-20,000	3,037 – 4,860 or 24.3%	2,200

Source: OFIDA and Raeymaekers 2007

Traders benefitted enormously from this arrangement. On containers of imprint cloth, for example, importers saved at least 64 per cent in tax duties on their estimated values. Cost-benefit analyses show that Nande traders continued their lucrative business activities and benefitted from the new political arrangement. The tax arrangement evolved over time from a simple technical note to fully institutionalised back payments or loans from the traders to the rebels.

I was told that some traders managed to get rid of their competitors during the rebellions. They apparently asked the rebels to destroy their stock and to even kill some of them. One Nande trader who managed to flee to London after his son was killed claims to have been a victim of these practices.⁹ This, indeed, poses the general question of how business is protected in a stateless situation. Even in 2006, state power remained really non-existent in Butembo. There is a figurehead mayor whose role has been reduced to publicly conveying messages from the Roman Catholic bishop or from the Confederation of Traders (FEC) to the general population. Everybody in Butembo knows that the real decision makers in the city are the traders and, to a lesser extent, also the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Many projects in Butembo have been realised through the initiative of the Church and the traders, with very minimal involvement or intervention from the official representatives of the state. Traders could use the *Mayi Mayi* militia to intimidate a foreign contractor. There indeed seems to be a viable *de facto* local state, run in this manner by the traders and the Church, with only a nominal role relegated to the representative of the official state. In June 2001, the Movement of Liberation of the Congo (MLC), a rebel group in Northern Congo backed by Uganda led by Jean-Pierre Bemba, one of Mobutu's sons-in-law, decided to invade Butembo to lay his hands on the traders' fortunes. He was coming from the Bafwasende, north of Beni and Butembo. Bemba met very little resistance during his military campaign. Aware of the terrible intentions of MLC leaders and fearing for their business, Nande traders, with the complicity of the Catholic bishop of Butembo, cynically spread the rumour that Jean-Pierre Bemba's soldiers were cannibals feeding on Pygmies from the Bafwasende region. This news was given international spread by the Catholic channels, forcing the International Criminal Court's intervention and imposition of an international investigation on the MLC military campaign. Bemba had to halt his campaign against Butembo. This "news" was carefully manufactured by the Nande leadership, including traders and the Catholic Church hierarchy (Pottier 2007).

A second tentative invasion came from the south and was engineered by Rwandan-backed rebel leader Nkunda Batware in June 2004. He was moving north toward Beni. The reason why Rwanda was able to get international support for this was because President Kagame was able to convince the CIA that Nande businessmen were trading uranium with Osama bin-Laden's al-Qaida. To stop the invasion, the Bishop of Butembo flew to the Vatican to seek support. The

Vatican contacted the State Department to state that there was no uranium in Butembo and insisted that the allegations against Nande traders were false. The US State Department sent a representative to Butembo to investigate. It was after the US was convinced that the Nande had no business with bin Laden that the invasion was halted. The Bishop's prestige was greatly augmented after this turn of events.

According to Charles Tilly's account of the origins of the European system, coercion and capital go hand in hand. Tilly maintains that, historically, the capitalised coercion mode, of government which involved elements of both coercion-intensive and capital-intensive modes, proved most effective in war and therefore provided a compelling model "which European states soon followed (Tilly 1992:30). In the absence of a powerful state, merchants draw protection for their merchandise and their enterprises from militias, while militias gain access to military means from merchants' support. The formation and continued existence of a state implies a constant process of separating off certain aspects of social relations and defining them as political, and hence, as separate from the "economic" (Holloway 1994). Civil wars tend to involve a blurring of these reified divisions.

When I arrived in Butembo, my goal was to observe the Nande's trading networks and their Dubai and Hong Kong connexions. I was interested not only in the Nande's trading networks and economic success, but also the interconnection between their prosperity, their relative security, and the effectiveness of their strategies at insulating themselves from violence nearby. I retained a certain measure of optimism about the presumably innocuous character of what might be called the Nande "model" or strategy, which could conceivably be generalised to the rest of the country or to other African contexts. After almost ten months in Butembo trying to figure out how Nande society is being reconfigured and reconstructed in this context of violence and transnational trade relations, I came to recognise that there is indeed a *de facto* local state run by the traders, in concert with the Catholic Church officialdom. After a long period of participant observation, moreover, I concluded that there has been a profound complicity of Nande commercial success and regional prosperity with the surrounding civil war and the perpetuation of violence. Indeed, some Nande traders were direct beneficiaries and also direct financiers of various militias and also entangled with the so-called autochthonic movement, not only against the Rwandan invaders but also the Congolese "Rwandans", as described by Stephen Jackson (2004). Thus, it seems that the real third leg of the triumvirate is plainly not the weak central state officials, but rather the organised violence and coercive capacity of the militias. It is well-known in Butembo that if you want to reach the rebel leaders, you must borrow the bishop's car, which they easily recognise. In fact, the bulk of the local militias' membership is comprised of former choir members, altar boys, and scouts. The Catholic Church has an indubitable persuasive power over the militias.

Traders, especially members of the G8, are each owners of gold mines in the region (especially at Mangurugipa, 60 miles north of Butembo). They acquired them in the 1980s when the Mobutu regime liberalised the mining sector in Zaire. To protect these mines against rivals or other contenders, traders have contracted militias as permanent private security forces often led by members of their own extended families. They provide weapons for them in exchange for security services. During the war, as we have seen, militias were used to protect the region against a probable invasion by Rwandan forces or Kinyarwanda-speaking rebels. The militias exuded a sense of relative independence vis-à-vis their bosses during that period. Lots of cows belonging to traders were slaughtered for food, and some farms were decimated by the same militias who were supposed to protect them. Therefore, the relationship between the two groups has indeed been rather complex. But, as already indicated, these relations are significantly based on kinship and ethnic solidarity. The militias were sometimes used to intimidate competitors or other people whom the traders considered dangerous to their business interest. A South African contractor who helped the traders to build the hydro-electric dam, for instance, was kidnapped by the militias after he strongly disagreed with the terms of negotiation that the traders were proposing.

It is also instructive to note John Holloway's distinction between the (territorial, usually national) "state" and the wider social relation of "the political", which is not necessarily orchestrated through a state as such, but does in any case require the deployment of organised coercion or violence. In this case, there is a very clear social and political hegemony of the Nande bourgeoisie, legitimated through the Church officialdom, the figurehead mayor, and sometimes other customary figures of Nande authority; it is premised upon not one but several relatively mobile formations of violence that supply the ultimate resources of coercion and thus social order. Outside of the traders' central sphere of control, there has been a greater or lesser chaos and varying degrees of reign of terror by the respective militias. For their own part, the militias have sought to act as *de facto* territorial (albeit mobile) states in the imposition of taxes and the collection of tariffs and customs duties through border policing practices, but the traders have always maintained an upper hand. Clearly relying upon the availability of the militias violence to secure their own ends, as needed, the traders have sustained sometimes unstable but otherwise enduring kinds of mutual dependency. As long as the traders do not try to impose themselves too much on the militias' spheres of brutal extraction in the peripheries of the Nande centre, and as long as the militias steer clear of that centre and do not disrupt the Nande capitalists' prosperous sphere of control and stability, then there is a definite, if somewhat elusive, correspondence between the traders' social and economic power. Seen economically, the militias therefore assume the role of junior partners to the

most powerful traders who ultimately rely upon agricultural production and mineral extraction (and not merely commerce) as their base of accumulation, whereas the only economic resource the militias have is the sheer robbery facilitated by their armed force. It is much more sustaining and lucrative for both sides to maintain this pact. This kind of predatory violence is a telltale sign of what has come to be known as Marx's concept of primitive accumulation. Thus, many of the decisive contemporary features of global capital accumulation converge in this apparently remote geographical borderland, where ruthless plunder and genocidal civil war are the complements to spectacularly prosperous networks of transnational trade.

Conclusion

The previous chapters of the book have shed light on the innovative and resilient features of Nande transnational networks and their transnational production of local community. This chapter, too, has exposed how this particular formulation of transnationalism and ethnic insularity collude with an internecine (even genocidal) violence very near the periphery of its seemingly remote ethnic homeland, in the distant borderland of a collapsed state. This means, as we will see in the following chapter, that horrendous civil wars of the sort that has racked the DRC, may be merely opportunities for the cynical restructuring of the global capital accumulation in places where what matters to global capital is access to valuable resources and what is expendable is the life and limbs of the people who inhabit any particular corner of the planet where these resources are to be found.

Indeed, the Nande traders and other local Nande and non-Nande producers are only one node along a global nexus that finally links this devastating violence to apparently far-removed and ostensibly "clean" transnational capitalist enterprises, which, of course, are inevitably a product of the colonial legacy as well. It seems that the winners of the war will be a network of private organisations, most notably transnational corporations, metropolitan states, and their mediating multilateral institutions, including the UN country missions with their caretaker countries, the US, EU and now China. The world's moral sensibilities have been transformed in the new era in which historical and ideological differences on how to manage wealth and create a bourgeoisie have supposedly come to an end, as Francis Fukuyama, the prophet of the new age of super-profit, has put it. There is, therefore, a profound relationship between the world's dominant liberal moral discourses and the changing conceptions of war in the heart of Africa. In a global order in which civil war disrupts capital accumulation—as usual, and therefore, must ultimately be contained—even if it may have provided some extraordinary occasions for what Harvey calls accumulation by dispossession—a more pragmatic neo-liberalism is being imposed on the peoples of the DRC

(as in Iraq). Neo-liberalism seeks to ensure the survival of existing large post-colonial nation-states in the region against the prospect of disintegration and dissolution. In this context, the Nande present themselves as the paragons of peaceful development while also reinforcing and abetting the conflict they would seem to deplore. Local war is bad for local and global business, except to the extent that it can be profitably managed. In this respect, this thesis has implications for the Great Lakes regional political economy, encompassing DRC's eastern neighbours: Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, and for the study of international political economy more generally.

The Nande's new-found desire for government at a distance and governance through local communitarian mechanisms can be understood to articulate perfectly a kind of neo-liberalism, whereby a weak national state serves as a hollow shell providing a minimum of security and stability for otherwise unhindered capital accumulation, where the so-called free market is entirely unencumbered, and in which local communities and networks are free from the onerous regulation, interference, and impositions of a state that might otherwise, if only occasionally, be an impediment to plunder.

The pursuit of profit by self-interested large businesses is the only remaining avenue of moral gain. Thus, ethics is inevitably coupled with business, and the language of business portrays the activity of pursuing profit as natural, harmonious and peaceful. John Le Carre is correct when he points out that the new ethos of globalisation asserts that business is not the self-interest of economics but the pinnacle of ethical behaviour. If we can be persuaded that the pursuit of profit is a natural law rather than a lowly pursuit of economic self-interest, then the language of the market has become truly hegemonic. What Polanyi feared is now being realised in full. The silent hegemony of the market is leading Africa directly towards protracted wars with dire consequences for people's lives.

Notes

1. The term Banyamulenge refers to Congolese of Tutsi descents who live in a mountain called Mulenge. I will discuss this term later in the text.
2. Literally people of Rwanda. Indeed, the nomenclature in this region is politicised, fluid and difficult: some scholars refer to the same collective population as Banyarwanda, other call them the Rwandophone or the Kinyarwanda speakers. In South Kivu, they are referred to as Banyamulenge or Congolese Tutsi to distinguish them from Congolese Hutu. Banyarwanda is a generic term used to refer to both Congolese Hutu and Tutsi of Rwandan heritage.
3. There are two extremist ideologies around this question of citizenship: on the Congolese side, the ideology is that there is no such thing as Rwandophone, they are all Rwandans and have to go back. On the other side, the ideology is that an important part of North Kivu belonged to Rwanda and has to be returned as part of Rwanda.

4. Another law in 1972 moved the cut-off date further back to January 1950. Article 17 of the 1972 law stipulates: “*Les personnes originaires du Rwanda-Urundi qui étaient établies dans la Province du Kivu avant le 1er Janvier 1950 à la suite d’une décision de l’autorité coloniale et qui ont continué à résider depuis lors dans la République jusqu’à l’entrée en vigueur de la présente loi ont acquis la nationalité Zaïroise à la date du 30 juin 1960*” (Ndeshyo 1992).
5. For more on Rwandan genocide, see Mamdani 2001, Gourevitch 1999, and Pottier 2000, Melvern 2000, Prunier 1995).
6. Habyarimana was the second Hutu president of Rwanda from 1973 until the beginning of the Rwandan genocide in 1994. He led a coup against the former Hutu president Kayibanda who has been the Rwandan Head of State since the 1959 Hutu Revolution in Rwanda.
7. Sources diverge on the number of people killed during the two-month massacre. Some sources give a low of 200,000 (Von Glahn 1996), while others report a high of 1,000,000 (Prunier 1995:263).
8. This election never took place because Mobutu was removed from power on the 16 of May 1997 by Laurent Desire Kabila.
9. I was not able to confirm or refute these claims.

9

Nande Trust Networks in New Globalised Relations: Invention of Post-postcolonial State?

Nande traders continue to engage in various ways with the global economy, primarily as intermediaries between subnational and transnational economic arenas. Their role as commercial power brokers put them at the centre of the emerging transnational economic order in the Great Lakes region. As I will show, the horrendous civil wars that racked the DRC are, in fact, mere opportunities for the cynical restructuring of the global capital accumulation in places where global capital requires effective access to valuable resources.

This chapter will show that the Nande capitalist class welcomes the sort of frail neo-liberal national state that is apparently on the agenda of the global corporations interested in the DRC's resources as well as their caretakers – the US, European, and Chinese governments, as well as the UN. The Nande model is apprehensible as a kind of distinctly post-post-colonial, post-civil war, post-nationalist model – along the lines of let the free market do its thing, and as if by an invisible hand the whole society will benefit. In the following pages, I will show how the structural aspects of the global political economy constrained any moves towards a peace that was beneficial to local states. The chapter will also discuss the sort of national state Nande traders would like to see restored.

Global Dynamics of the DRC's War Economy

Collier (2000) uses greed as an explanation for Africa's wars and focuses on the "honey pot" effect of Africa's mineral resources to the bee-like instincts of African warlords (de Soysa 2000:124). The evidence suggests, however, that the same honey pot attracts multinational corporations.

The UN panel for illegal exploitation of the DRC's resources established that economic transactions such as the production and exports of diamonds, coltan,

gold and timber generate value-added income for those who are directly conducting the war. The fact that exports leave the Congo via Kampala or Kigali is in itself not proof of illegal exploitation of resources. In fact, merchandise exported from Eastern Congo naturally proceeds via these trade routes irrespective of wartime or peacetime. As Marysse (2003) argues, the problem lies not so much in the illegal exploitation of goods, but in the control and theft of part of the value-added income that in peacetime would have benefitted the Congolese people. Marysse prefers to use the word “plunder” instead of “illegal exploitation”. For him, plunder occurs when an economic resource, after a deduction of the value added has been spent in the country, leaves the country without compensation through the importation of goods or money (Marysse and Andre 2001:314). In this respect, data from the UN Panel shows that warring stakeholders steal profits and impose ad-hoc “taxes”, which consequently do not benefit the Congolese. However, what the Panel did not do is determine the size of the portion of value-added income withheld by military-commercial groups. Nor does it tell us how much is invested in the continuation of war and how much disappears into the pockets of the stakeholders, be they military personnel or international traders.

With respect to the global political economy, two dynamisms of change can be recognised. The first involves the repayment and servicing of national debts by the developing world. The inability of developing countries to service their debts has been exacerbated by the fall of prices in raw materials and rising level of governmental corruption. To respect repayment schedules, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) compel countries to apply three unpopular decisions: (i) reduce government expenditure drastically in the social sectors, including education and health care; (ii) privatise state enterprises; and (iii) devalue the currency.

The second dynamic involves changing strategies and tactics for both mining corporations and states of the developing “South”, and it relates to the recent significant increase in the privatisation of state mining enterprises, which has benefitted the multinational corporations immensely. While the 1970s were characterised by the nationalisation of industries, especially those linked with the exploitation of natural resources, present dynamics reveal an inverse movement towards the privatisation of the mining sector. In 1993, about 18.5 per cent of global mining production (except oil) was in the hands of state enterprises. By 1994 this percentage had declined to 16 per cent and it was expected to be just over 14 per cent at the end of 1996 (Moore 2003). The privatisation of mines has been very important in developing countries: from June 1995 to May 1996, US\$ 2.2 billion was spent on the acquisition of state-owned mines in African countries.

At the time of Laurent Desire Kabila's move into Kinshasa, Zairian privatisation was the order of the day. The structure of the global gold mining industry was indicative of the new power that multinational mineral corporations have at their disposal. Prominent mining companies have argued about concessions of gold in the Oriental Province of DRC for a long time, which is why this province was a strategic domain in all wars of conquests in the Congo. The monopoly by the Public Office of Gold of Kilomoto (OKIMO) of over 82 square kilometres with reserves valued at 100 tons never stopped aggravating the big transnational mining corporations. In August 1996, under the Mobutu regime, OKIMO had already given up the monopoly to the Barrick Gold Corporation (BGC), which has President George Bush and former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney on its board of directors (Moore 2003). When Laurent Kabila reneged on the process of privatisation, the mineral corporations must have been perturbed. Some analysts have suggested that Kabila's withdrawal from many of the concessions he agreed to while fighting his way to Kinshasa was enough for multinationals to give the green light to their host states, Uganda and Rwanda, to turn against him.

Angola is another pertinent case. Angola will soon be producing more oil than Nigeria, making Africa rank above the Middle East as the largest supplier to the U.S. With French oil interests centred in Congo-Brazzaville and that of the United States in Angola, the Bas Congo region is of strategic importance. However, given that Angola supported the Laurent Kabila regime in 1998, the U.S. has had mixed opinions on the preservation of a Kinshasa axis. Currently, Angola also has total control over the distribution of oil products in the DRC. The Halliburton Company, U.S. Vice-President Dick Cheney's former company and a giant oil services provider, has many interests in Angola. And Condoleezza Rice, the Secretary of State, was on Chevron's board of directors (Masland 2000:46-47).

U.S. foreign policy discourse on Africa has often combined economic interests and fear and wrapped them up in a policy package emphasising "security" and market-driven development. Given the conflict in the DRC and the US-supported Rwanda and Uganda invasions, the DRC has become a pariah state of sorts. If indeed the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), which accompanied and led Laurent Kabila into Kinshasa, is responsible for the genocide of nearly 232,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees (excluding up to 8,150 in Kibeho and Kanama) (Emizat 2000), then the new Rwanda is indeed a pariah state of comparable rank to its predecessor. It executed a quarter to one half the number that the *Interahamwe* slaughtered during the 1994 genocide, yet very few voices have uttered the word genocide in respect of the Congo massacres.

According to Philippe Biyoya, Laurent Kabila's big mistake was to annul the deals he made with the mining corporations and to forget that the Cold War had ended. Mobutu managed to Africanise the whole Congolese economy and parcel

it out to his friends and temporary allies because the U.S. needed him to keep communism away from the mines. Kabila thought he could go back to Mobutu's policies of Zairianisation with impunity and go against the interests of the corporations.

The relationships among various mining companies, rebels (turned into dictators), superpower governments and the UN are matters of agency. Investment priorities in the Congo suggest that corporations, aside from Banro, were creating joint ventures in the area in which Laurent Kabila had control and in areas under rebel control. The same companies chafing at Kabila's farce in 1997 also created joint ventures with Gecamines, the DRC state-owned mining company. For example, American Mineral Fields (AMF – 11 per cent owned by Union Minière), has recently signed a 60/40 deal with Gecamines to extract cobalt tailings from the Musonoi River. Once incensed with Kabila for ignoring their support during the “first rebellion” and then signing a deal with De Beers, AMF became more pragmatic. It also had a 50/50 deal with ZINCOR, owned by ISCOR, and Gecamines to rehabilitate the zinc and copper mine near Lubumbashi. AMF simultaneously supported the rebel movement Rally for Congolese Democracy (RDC), playing both sides in the hope that peace would come along the line of the Lusaka agreement of August 1998. This situation is not at all new in the history of warfare. In World War II, the Ford Motor Company was building engines for the German Fokker planes used by the enemy's air force.

In September 2000, the American OM Group created a joint venture with the Belgian Group George Forrest International, investing US\$110 million in a tailing processing plant near Lubumbashi (which includes the world's largest electrode oven). Such contracts suggest that global mining corporations saw the Lubumbashi area as safe enough to pursue their deal-making with the Kabila regime.

Needless to say that international business is opportunistic. In the absence of a definitive intervention from other states, the multinationals will look for any indication of stability before investing a significant amount of capital. If the world dominant states are interested in the business of starting wars, opportunities still abound. There have been allegations against UN peacekeepers in many countries, including Haiti (Polman 2003), but in the DRC, the UN peacekeeping mission could be regarded as providing the material and practical conditions for state (re)formation (or perpetuated civil war), on the one hand, while also supplying the transnational military means for orchestrating capital accumulation and extraction in the absence of a reliable local (national) state, on the other. It is hardly surprising that in Kisangani, UN peacekeepers are derisively known as UN warkeepers.

Is the UN Mission in Congo Perpetuating the Civil War?

The result of the Lusaka peace agreement signed between the rebels and the government of Joseph Kabila was the creation of MONUC (*Mission des Nations Unies aux Congo*) in July 2003. BBC's Martin Plaut wrote the following after an investigation of UN troops trading gold for guns in 2005:

Pakistan is the biggest contributor to the UN peacekeeping effort. Pakistani UN peacekeeping troops have traded in gold and sold weapons to Congolese militia groups they were meant to disarm, the BBC has learnt. These militia groups were guilty of some of the worst human rights abuses during the DRC's long civil war. The trading went on in 2005. A UN investigative team sent to gather evidence was obstructed and threatened. The team's report was buried by the UN itself to "avoid political fallout". These events took place in and around the mining town of Mongwalu, in north-eastern DRC. The Pakistani battalion of the UN peacekeeping mission deployed there in 2005 and helped bring peace to an area that had previously seen bitter fighting between the Lendu and Hema ethnic groups. Locals welcomed them, but the lure of the rich alluvial gold mines proved too much to resist for some, recalls the head of the miners' association, Liki Likambo. "I saw a UN Pakistani soldier who came to buy gold from one of the gold negotiators here in Mongwalu. I was there in the shop. I saw it with my own eyes." Soon the Pakistani officers were doing deals directly with the FNI militia.

The gold from mines run by militias went to Pakistani peacekeepers.

Evarista Anjasubu – a local businessman – said he had known of transactions between Pakistani officers and two of the most notorious militia leaders called Kung Fu and Dragon who controlled the gold mines. "They were already friends. I knew them well.... It was gold that ... was the basis of their friendship. So the gold extracted from mines went directly to the Pakistanis. They used to meet in the UN camp in Mongwalu, in a thatched house." As the trade developed, the Pakistani officers brought in the Congolese army and then Indian traders from Kenya.

Richard Ndilu, in charge of immigration at Mongwalu airstrip, became suspicious in late 2005 when an Indian businessman arrived there and went to stay at the camp of the Pakistani peacekeepers.

When the UN was alerted to the allegations of gold trading by Human Rights Watch in late 2005, they instituted a major investigation by the office for Internal Oversight Services. What they uncovered was even more explosive. This is from a witness statement given to the UN by a Congolese officer engaged in the disarming of the militia in the nearby town of Nizi. The battle for mining concessions has cost countless lives. The officer expressed his regrets over the malpractices of a Pakistani battalion under the auspices of Major Zanfar. He revealed that the arms surrendered by ex-combatants were secretly returned to them by Major Zanfar thereby compromising the work they had collectively done earlier. "Repeatedly, he saw militia who had been disarmed one day, but the next day would become re-armed again. The information he could obtain was always the same, that it would

be the Pakistani battalion giving arms back to the militia.” This evidence was backed up by an interpreter working with the Pakistani battalion at Mongwalu. On arriving at the Officer’s Mess, the interpreter found two militia leaders – known as Kung Fu and Dragon. The interpreter said that the first question from Major Ali was to Kung Fu – asking him: “What about the weapons I gave you? What about the weapons Monuc gave you?”

A UN investigation team arrived in Mongwalu in August 2006. At first, the Pakistani battalion there cooperated with them. But when they attempted to seize a computer with apparently incriminating documents on it a stand-off ensued. The UN-found weapons were returned to militias in Mongwalu. The Pakistani surrounded the UN police accompanying the investigators with barbed wire and put two armoured personnel carriers outside their living quarters at a nearby Christian mission. Thoroughly intimidated, the investigators were airlifted out of Mongwalu.

When we put the allegations of weapons trading to the head of the UN in Congo, Ambassador William Swing, he denied emphatically that any weapons have been handed by his troops to the militia. “This I can categorically deny. What we have done is just the opposite. We have demobilized more than 20,000. We have taken in caches of arms. We have destroyed arms. We have done public burnings of these arms. And there is absolutely nothing to that allegation”. He said that the investigation into gold trading has yet to be completed. The UN in New York has refused to explain what took place or why, nearly two years after the allegations first surfaced, the Congolese people have no idea what action – if any – has been taken to discipline the Pakistani soldiers concerned (BBC 23 May 2007).

On 28 April 2008, the BBC published a follow up article:

UN troops armed DR Congo militias: the UN has covered up claims that its troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo gave arms to militias and smuggled gold and ivory, the BBC has learned.

The allegations, based on confidential UN sources, involved Pakistani and Indian troops working as peacekeepers. The BBC’s Martin Plaut who returned to DRC to follow up his initial investigation into the allegations, says they have managed to bring a measure of stability since they were first established by UN in February 2000. They have also helped disarm the warring factions, run democratic elections and assisted with reconstruction. But an 18-month BBC investigation for Panorama has found evidence that:

- Pakistani peacekeepers in the eastern town of Mongwalu were involved in the illegal trade in gold with the FNI militia, providing them with weapons to guard the perimeter of the mines;
- Indian peacekeepers operating around the town of Goma had direct dealings with the militia responsible for the Rwandan genocide, now living in Eastern DRC;
- The Indians traded gold, bought drugs from the militias and flew a UN helicopter into the Virunga National Park, where they exchanged ammunition for ivory.

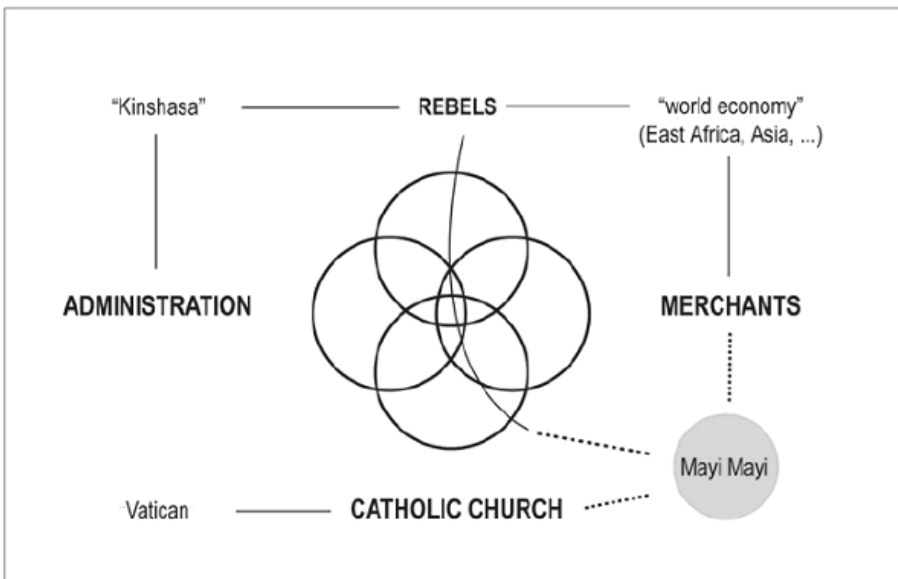
The UN looked into the allegations concerning the Pakistani troops in 2007. It concluded that one officer had been responsible for dealing in gold –allowing traders to use a UN aircraft to fly into the town, putting them up at the UN base and taking them around the town. But the UN decided that “in the absence of corroborative evidence” its investigators could not substantiate the allegation “that Pakistani peacekeepers supplied weapons or ammunition to the militia. It did, however, identify “an individual who seemed to have facilitated gold smuggling”.

But returning to Eastern DRC, the BBC spoke to several residents of the mining town of Mongwalu, who said they had seen the FNI militia re-armed. One former militant told our correspondent that he had witnessed seven boxes of ammunition being brought from the UN camp to re-supply the FNI during a critical fire-fight. Two FNI leaders known as Kung-fu and Dragon, who have been jailed in the capital, Kinshasa, have stated publicly that they received help from the UN. The BBC managed to get into the maximum security jail and both confirmed this. Kung Fu, whose real name is General Mateso Ning, said: “Yes, it’s true, they did give us arms. They said to us that we would help them take care of the zone.” The FNI has been described by Human Rights Watch as “some of the most murderous individuals that operate in Eastern Congo.” The ethnic Lendu militia was involved in the bitter clashes with their Hema rivals in the Ituri district. UN insiders close to the investigation told the BBC they had been prevented from pursuing their inquiries for political reasons. Our correspondent says that in short, the Pakistanis, who are the largest troop contributors to the UN in the world, were too valuable to alienate...

Another allegation that surfaced in July 2008 is that of an officer of the Indian contingent commanding a blue helmets’ base in North Kivu who publicly stated in Kitchanga that he had sympathy towards an armed group, the National Congress for the Defence of People (CNDP) and its decorated leader, Laurent Nkunda. The latter is a Congolese Tutsi who has been fighting the national government army since 2003, and the UN peacekeepers were supposed to dismantle his movement. The Indian UN officer was said to have told Nkunda: “Brother, you are fighting the noble cause and are ready to sacrifice yourself like a real revolutionary.”²¹ MONUC has distanced itself from this officer, and has declared that, “by this unacceptable declaration which is completely contrary to the spirit and letter of the mandate of United Nations peacekeepers, this blue helmet, in an obvious way, failed in his duty of impartiality and acted in total contradiction to the Security Council resolutions relating to MONUC and its mandate.”²²

This allegation appears to confirm the worst suspicions of the Congolese who believe that MONUC is perpetuating the war, especially in North Kivu and Ituri, in order to continue their business in gold, coltan, wofrem and ivory. Moreover, it looks as though this is part of a process that goes beyond the UN. The UN seems to be another sort of state, or part of an emerging global state,

that does not work very effectively at keeping the peace, but does certainly help a few people to accumulate wealth on the side. Of course, it is ostensibly creating a peace that will help big capital make a cleaner sweep. This is the primary role of global military governance. This is, indeed, the kind of state the Nande would like to have; a state whose role will be limited to creating opportunities for transnational business and not mingling in their local affairs. In other words, the Nande elite do not desire full autonomy or complete separation from the DRC state, and do not seek anything resembling a Nande national self-determination. Rather, they welcome the stabilisation of the national state, but only insofar as it would be relatively a weak and unobtrusive one, because it leaves them unencumbered by state surveillance and the unwelcome taxation of their transnational and cross-border trade; in short, they prefer an arrangement not very different from the situation that has persisted in various forms throughout the recent decades (even back into the Mobutu era). However, now, as economic power brokers, the Nande trust network is placed at the centre of the transnational economic order. They have to find balance and equilibrium between different forces at play; they have to take into account each actor's transnational deployments in the economic (and sometimes political) sphere. The following chart expresses the kind of equilibrium Nande commercial entrepreneurs have to strive for in order to achieve success:



Source: Raeymaeker, 2007

How, then, do the Butembo commercial entrepreneurs envision their activities with regard to the evolution of the DRC state? And what kind of state they would like to see restored?

Toward a Restoration of the DRC State

This concluding section will address the future of the DRC state and the position of the transnational Nande trading networks in the emergent context of the post-civil war political situation. The question under primary consideration is: what might the form be in which the DRC nation-state would make the persistence of the Nande's distinctly transnational mode of self-sufficiency possible, difficult or impossible?

After twelve months of field research from August 2005 to August 2006, I returned to Butembo after the October 2006 elections, the first in the Congo in 40 years. The elections were organised by the UN, militarily backed by 17,000 UN peacekeeping forces, and financially supported by the European Union's aid of US\$0.5 billion.

How did Nande traders, who managed to build and protect self-sustaining, prosperous transnational economic enterprises in the absence of effective national government, apprehend the restoration of a central state power?

I questioned a sample of 40 traders, chosen according to the relative importance of their business. Very quickly a line of division appeared between, on the one hand, small merchants who go to Dubai and China fairly regularly and maintain one or two shops in Butembo and another in their village of origin, and, on the other hand, the members of the G8 (the eight richest traders in Butembo) and a fast-growing set of newcomers who have recently invested in oil and gold.

For the first group, the change in the political landscape is apprehended with fear and uncertainty because all their businesses are built upon the dysfunction of the state. They evade taxes, bypass customs service controls, exaggerate prices on the market, bully peasants who try to resist them, etc. In short, they rely upon methods that would not be possible if there was a functioning state. They generally constitute, together with teachers, professors, and other professionals, the middle class between the rich traders, on the one hand, and the poor peasantry and urban working class on the other. The perspective of these smaller traders was well expressed by one of them:

If we are able to sell items cheaper in Butembo, it is because we don't pay customs duties and bypass many other fiscal obligations. Were we to pay these taxes, the price of merchandise in the market wouldn't be affordable for people.

This argument was forcefully rejected by teachers who are well acquainted with traders going to Dubai and China. They argue that traders in Butembo generally inflate their price on the market, with some making profits well over 200 per cent. For example, an item bought in Dubai at US\$0.50 may be sold in Butembo at US\$5. Therefore, some of my respondents rejected the argument that fair prices on the market were a valid reason for traders to bypass customs services. Other smaller traders argued that if they bypass customs services and other fiscal obligations as far as cross-border trade is concerned, it is because of the corrupt nature of the customs service agents. For each container of goods crossing the border into the Congo, there is an arbitrary fee of US\$8,000. Merchandise is taxed not *ad valorem* but through an arbitrary fee per container. But of this US\$8,000 fee only US\$3000 goes to the state treasury; the rest is pocketed by the customs service agents. The latter have many of the most beautiful houses and villas in the city of Beni. In addition, they have to send some money to bribe their superiors in Kinshasa to remain on the job.

While staying with a trader, I observed that he brought three containers of textiles from China. At Kasindi, the border crossing city, he managed to pay US\$18,000 for the three containers instead of US\$24,000. But he told me that he was quite sure that only US\$10,000 of that sum will go to the state treasury and the rest will disappear into the pockets of the customs officials. He knew that because he was given a receipt of US\$10,000 rather than US\$18,000.

Thus the argument goes on. Some traders would have respected the law if the customs service agents were not so corrupt. If businessmen could be sure that the money they pay would contribute to mending roads or other public services, they would have paid their due to the state. As one complained: "I cannot pay just to make these customs service agents rich". These traders would appear to be looking forward to the restoration of state power, and especially to a reformed state to be able to get rid of corrupted agents. Many are, however, sceptical that things will change for the better; so they remain complacent and carry on business as usual.

The G8 were very enthusiastic about the prospects for change and the restoration of a strong central state for multiple reasons. The first and most important one relates to security. Traders hope that the security situation will improve so that people from other regions can resume coming to Butembo for business, after the civil war chased them away.

Another principal reason why the G8 traders wanted a restoration of state authority is that they are eager to move forward with the industrialisation of the region. They have come to the conclusion that almost everything they import from China or Dubai can be manufactured in Butembo. Instead of going to Dubai and China to buy things people purchase in Butembo, they are confident that they could be producing the same items locally. Some of them are planning

to build small production units and factories to manufacture clothes and other items that they have been bringing from abroad. One member of the G8 told me that he sent half a dozen people to China to acquire the know how, to study the technologies the Chinese use, in order to implement them in Butembo. When I asked about the availability of energy for such manufacturing endeavours, he said studies had been done on the possibility of using hydro-electric power in the region since 1990. *Pedeika* and *"Energie sans frontières"* indeed investigated such prospects in the region in the 1990s. These studies are now being updated in relation to the project of industrialisation. Traders are planning to imitate the work done by German engineers in Butuwe Barrage in the Congo in 1984. That dam is already providing electricity for a factory belonging to one member of the G8. Indeed, in 2004, as I mentioned in chapter five, traders from the G8 made a deal with Clarkson Power, a South African engineering company, to build just such a hydro-electric dam to provide energy and light to the city of Butembo. On that occasion however, as we have seen, the supplier became disenchanted with the traders because they never provided the funds they pledged publicly. They then used second-hand materials to build the dam, with disastrous consequences, thus providing electricity only a few days a week. The contract with Clarkson Power was terminated in 2006, and the presidential candidate Joseph Kabila, during the electoral campaign, promised to repair and renovate SENOKI (Société d'Electricité du Nord Kivu). In the meantime, he supplied a generator to provide electricity to the entire city. Now in power, if the Kabila government can solve the energy question, traders will easily be able to proceed with their industrialisation projects.

When I left Butembo in August 2006, there were two banks and one credit and savings cooperative (*la Cruche*). Nonetheless, many traders continued to deposit their money with one trader, Mr. Kisoni, who then channelled it to banks outside the country. He played the role of a virtual bank, receiving up to US\$1 million a week from numerous traders. He bought gold with this money and moved the gold to Kampala or Dubai, where he sold it and deposited the money for each trader into their bank accounts in Hong Kong.

During my last trips to Butembo in January 2007 and March 2008, I noted that the number of banks had tripled and many cooperatives have been created as a result of electoral promises of improved security. Traders hoped that with the restoration of state authority, they could develop greater confidence in the financial institutions that would make them deposit or borrow money for their businesses. They expect that they would no longer need to send money to foreign banks overseas. Their expectations were not entirely misplaced.

The elections did raise their confidence, making one Nande trader to repatriate US\$40 million from his account in Switzerland to invest in a construction project in Kinshasa. Mr. Padona, also known as Mangateso, the owner of Socoplast

(Societe congolaise de plastique) in Kinshasa, is now the landlord of many buildings in Kinshasa. As the rumour goes, he received US\$300,000 a month from his tenants. Another Nande trader, Mandrabi, who owns an airline company in Butembo, has newly acquired three big boats to transport goods and persons from Kisangani to Kinshasa along the Congo River.

All these evidences show a real desire among Nande traders to invest at home since the elections, and some of them are genuinely very optimistic about the prospect of positive change in the region. I was encouraged to return after five years to witness the anticipated transformations. There was also talk among traders of agribusiness. During the last decade, traders have invested in cattle. Some own thousands of cows and are now thinking of expanding the dairy industry to produce cheese, yogurt, etc. These ideas are not new, but the new context of state restoration seemed to make them imminently feasible. Agribusiness is actually possible only with an environment of peace and security.

The security question is indeed paramount to a region that has seen so much violence over the last decade. Now, however, the problem that traders face is the continued presence of militia groups associated with the rebellions. As earlier indicated, there was an organic relationship between the largest traders and the multiple militia groups in Butembo and its environs. The justification was that since the state was not able to protect their goods and businesses, traders made formal alliances with militia groups to protect themselves and their businesses. Mbusa Nyamuisi, the newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Kabila government, was the key political figure behind these traders-militia arrangements. Even though he is a Nande, traders in Butembo lobbied Kabila not to appoint him to the defence portfolio because they knew that he would not be able to dismantle the militias that he himself created when he was a rebel leader.

Since the liberalisation of the mining sector and the recent rebellions, each major trader has acquired a stake in the mining sector, becoming an owner of gold or coltan or cassiterite mines. Each G8 member exploits at least one mine and hires a group of militia to protect him against potential enemies and rivals. To equip these militias, traders import containers of textiles and other consumer goods, as well as some arms or light weapons for their respective security forces. The result is that there are many arms in the region, with uncontrolled militia involved occasionally in robberies and other criminal activities. Despite widespread public knowledge of this situation, there is as yet, no willingness on the side of traders to get rid of the militias. They are a kind of asset that the traders are not ready to abandon. It is an elementary part of their business. During negotiations for the new government, Nande traders lobbied for a friendly figure as Minister of Defence. Some people argue that this was one of the decisive reasons that the government of Prime Minister Gizenga took so long to be established, as

one Kinshasa newspaper *Le Potentiel* revealed on November 2006. With the assistance of political allies garnered during the pre-election period, including President Kabila himself, the Nande traders will likely be able to go on pursuing business as usual (including the business of force!). Finally, this situation confirms yet again the remarkable capabilities of Nande traders to adapt to diverse circumstances and challenges throughout the troubled political and economic history of the Congo. The spirit of capitalism and entrepreneurship, which Janet MacGaffey observed in Nande traders of the 1980s, has been distinguished by this versatility for adapting to changing sociopolitical contexts.

To conclude, this work has led me to expand my focus from the transnational trading activities underlying the Nande model of prosperity and the insulation of their local community from violence, to a more sober acknowledgement of the Nande's deep involvement in war as a mode of accumulation and in the proliferation of violence in the region. The last period of the field research pushed the envelope a bit far. Signs of increasing hostility towards the work surfaced. Some traders with whom I had enjoyed very sympathetic relations during my first stay in Butembo now refused to be interviewed. They do not want me to attract unwelcome attention to their private business in arms trafficking. On 26 December 2007, I was robbed at gunpoint by four heavily armed men with AK 47s in military uniform. I lost my laptop, digital camera, passport and money. It was around 7 p.m. at Kisalala, 15 minutes outside of Butembo. I was travelling in a taxi with four other people including the driver when we were suddenly stopped by a man standing in military fatigue in the middle of the road. Three others soon appeared and circled the car we were in. We were asked to leave the taxi and to hand over everything we had on us, especially money and mobile telephones. We all handed money and telephones, but one man took my laptop bag which contained not only the computer, but also a digital camera and my passport and air tickets. They, then let us go without any harm. The next morning, the driver came to my house with the air tickets telling me that one of the guys just threw it in the taxi before we left. No word about the passport or the laptop which contained all the information I had gathered during my field research. I still wonder if the second³ attack to which I fell victim may have been engineered by some of these traders. Indeed, there can be no doubt that many were puzzled by and plainly suspicious of my presence, the true purpose of my investigations, and especially by my US and UN connections.

The findings in this work may contribute some very interesting ethnographic insights into sensitive questions around arms trafficking, coercion, and profit making, and, more generally, into the theoretical and historical questions surrounding transnational trade, informal economy, fragmented violence, and capital accumulation in the context of civil war. Research in war zones is not impossible. Its success rests on two principal attitudes. The first is to avoid creating

a “conflict fetish” which uncritically accepts the premises of researches as a fundamental starting point (Goodhand 2000). In other words, it is fundamental to take into account the historical continuities and discontinuities that surround the analytical moment. History rarely produces abrupt changes or breaking points; various influences and forces converge into temporary equilibria. The second attitude is that flexibility should characterise the research in regions affected by armed conflict where population and phenomena are inherently unstable. Many reports or information are either scarce or unreliable, or even biased. However, such bias could be taken as a starting point to ask broader questions about political and economic legitimacy. Finally, we must consider the desired end of ethnographic research. How far can the envelope of research be pushed as far as war zones and regions affected by armed conflict are concerned?

Notes

1. See the entire declaration in Digitalcongo.net: <http://www.digitalcongo.net/article/52528>
2. <http://www.monuc.org/News.aspx?newsID=17754>
3. The first attack happened in February 2006 on the road between Goma and Butembo, outside of a village called Kiwadja, about 10 miles from Goma. Twelve armed men shouted on the bus I was in with 50 other passengers. The bus stopped and the gangs entered the bus and confiscated everything from watches to telephones and mobile phones, and money. None of us was killed. The day before that incident, a van was attacked, and all the six passengers were killed because the driver did not stop.

Conclusion

This work has inquired into the ways by which Nande traders from DRC's North Kivu province managed to protect self-sustaining and prosperous transnational enterprises in the absence of any central state power in the DRC and in the presence of multiple contenders for effective political control and a proliferation of fragmented coercive powers. Three parameters have been discussed as essential to the Nande adaptation from the minimal, thieving, and centralised Mobutu state to the complete disintegration of the state followed by a decade of civil war with region-wide ramifications. The work argues that the Nande historical context, their ethnic identity, and their organisation in trust networks, wherein members collectively set their long-term resources and enterprises at risk to the malfeasances, mistakes, or failures of family and friends (Tilly 2005), have been determinant in creating and sustaining post-state loyalties.

Capitalising on the exodus of many European traders and settlers during the political turmoil of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Nande quickly learnt to take advantage of the decline of state controls on the region's economy. What resulted was a rise in a new class of traders and the development of a widespread parallel economy. Smuggling gold (locally mined by primitive methods) out of the country became a means of raising preliminary capital for more legitimate businesses established later on (e.g., coffee production and export, transport of locally grown vegetables to urban markets, and contract work in the construction industry). Gold has also provided access to hard currency with which to purchase imported merchandise and pharmaceutical goods to meet the demands of a growing market in Eastern Congo. The central thesis of Janet MacGaffey's *Entrepreneurs and Parasites: The struggle for Indigenous Capitalism in Zaire* (1987) is that entrepreneurs like the Nande in North Kivu, who are not closely tied to the state, have contributed significantly more to local development than the state parasites who drain off the region's wealth without giving much in return. Butembo, the capital city of the Nande, has developed without any substantial fiscal contribution

from the state. In this book, I wanted to show how the Nande case has demonstrated the capacity of life to go on in spite of chaos and difficulties of all sorts in the surrounding milieu.

This book has concentrated on describing how Nande networks operate effectively even in the absence of the state. The Nande acquire by other means services that the state commonly provides elsewhere – protection, guarantee of contracts, creation of infrastructure, and adjudication of dispute.

This work is an anthropological one and focuses on actors and their relationships, as well as on the intended and unintended results of their interactions. Many Nande have grown rich from their lucrative international trade in and out of the region. Some Nande amass fortunes and invest their profits back into the community (MacGaffey 1987, Kabamba 2006), such that the region has a thriving economy, decent schools, and health care. Rather than orienting their economy westward toward the Congo River and the Congolese capital at Kinshasa, they orient their activities to the east along much older trade routes; they are hardly confined to East Africa but, rather, have strong ties that take them regularly to the Middle East and East Asia. This is very much the conclusion MacGaffey reached, but the current work has been conducted in the context of civil war while MacGaffey's research was done in the context of economic mismanagement by the Mobutu regime in the 1980s. The book extends the research into a new era of both catastrophic suffering and global connections. It shows how Nande traders adapted to ever changing conditions even in cases of extreme violence and civil war, where trading was even more difficult to pursue than under the predatory regime of Mobutu. The already existing myriad of taxes, regulations, road blocks, and devastated roads that were impeding trade, were in the nineties and beginning of the new century, compounded by different forms of violence, where warlords, rebellions, foreign armies, and United Nations peacekeepers in an intricate web of interests, strove for control, wealth and power.

If one follows Jean Francois Bayart (1996)'s definition and description of civil society – “new form of indirect rule, native culture being once again mobilised to control the natives” – Nande traders can be depicted as a “civil society beating the state” (Claster 1974). De Soto (2000) would characterise the Nande networks as a group of ethnic entrepreneurs staging a hidden revolution against a predatory regime. Vwakyanakasi (1982:1987) compares Nande traders' activities to a social liberation movement. Frustrated with being neglected by the state, Nande networks staged a systematic offense against legal discrimination and a regime designed only to benefit the dictator's allies. For those who focus on the phenomenon of informality, the activities of the Nande traders could be understood in opposition to a state which has subsequently acquired the image of a predatory and mafia-like political enterprise (De Herdt and Marysse 1996). This challenges commonplace

assumptions about Africa that equate the breakdown of the state with an inevitable breakdown of the economy. Nande networks could also be studied as a historical contingency of economic practices in Central Africa. Roitman (1998) used this approach in her study of economic regulation on the border of Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria. She views this illegal cross-border trade in terms of political technologies, i.e. they constitute that which is to be governed as a conscious regulatory intervention. Closer to my approach in this study is the work by Timotee Raeymaekers (2007) on Nande cross-border traders as power brokers of the new political “order” on the Congo-Ugandan frontier. I spent a couple of months with Tim in Butembo. We exchanged notes and articles. He edited my field reports and read comments of professor Tilly and what my other supervisors wrote. Raeymaekers has been extensively quoted in my text and I express kind gratitude for his contribution. Our research has overlapped in many respects and credit has been given to Tim where it was necessary. His work is that of an extremely attentive political scientist interested in the maintenance of order outside a state framework. My work as anthropologist concerns the social dynamism which allows the emergence of the new political and economic order in the absence of state sovereignty and national government.

This work has adopted an actor-centred approach. It focuses on the engagement of transnational Nande traders in the daily transformation of their local or ethnic community. The goal of the work was not to explain why some societies are doing better than others. Rather, it demonstrates that the relations and interactions between the subjects of a network have led intentionally and unintentionally to a form of governance in the absence of a central government and the constitution of sovereignty outside of the state.

Indeed, the state has not vanished entirely, but some of its major functions – monopoly of violence, redistribution of resources, and a certain level of political representation – have been taken over by an alliance of the traders, the Catholic Church and the militias. Nande traders still operate within the territorial jurisdiction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo state: their schools are accredited by the central government; doctors and lawyers receive permission to practice from the central government; indeed, the Nande traders are even enthusiastic about the reconstruction of the national state.

Nonetheless, this book has shown that several sovereignties and property right systems can coexist side by side. This is inconceivable for those with a normative view of governmental institutions and state sovereignty. The idea that failed states are symptomatic of failed societies has been terribly misleading and stems from a very naturalised, reified, and normative notion of state itself. The argument presented here is that the state coexists with other forms of social organisation that are not governmental agencies, but nevertheless have enormous

decision-making power over the material and practical realisation of objectives that govern social life. The history of the rise and the fall of state regimes in Africa is based on conflict and contingency. There is no general formula for the success of state projects; they always have to respond to local historical conditions and relations of struggle.

This book is, therefore, an anthropological critique of conventional political science analyses that define sovereignty narrowly in terms of the State. Sovereignty tends to be considered as a feature of a state's relation to other states, rather than as a social relation to the diverse population of its own ostensible citizens. Even when something close to the Weberian ideal-type of statehood emerges with a state exercising a monopoly over legitimate violence and serving as guarantor of social order, state organisations are still likely to be confronted with parallel or rival organisations that claim authority over certain domains of governance (cf. Raeymaekers 2007). Multiple layers of distinct sovereignties coexist side by side with the state as they intersect and reinforce, or compete, with each other.

Production of New Ethnic Differences

Based upon what were, anti-colonial, effectively “nationalist” premises, a set of critical preoccupations and demands have informed and animated the anti-ethnic bias in some post-colonial African studies critiques and have imposed constrictions upon the analysis of contemporary sociopolitical dynamics. New ethnic differences are produced and challenge the nationalist idea that ethnicity is purely and simply a colonially imposed reification of divisive differences. This study also discerns an ultimate complicity between those effectively nationalist scholarly positions (with their insistence on the subsumption or subordination of ethnic identification and social formations) and some of the disastrous legacies (the pervasive combination of elite corruption and mass austerity, dictatorship, genocide) variously perpetuated by post-colonial nationalist state projects.

The Nande case shows that because of the vibrant intra-ethnic competition among them, some of the community members have been able to reach out beyond the original spatial, economic, and mental boundaries of their ostensible group – culminating in transnational strategies that have finally guaranteed the group's political and economic survival in the midst of civil war. Like all commercial activities, the Nande experience did not occur in a well-structured and equitable environment. Nande trust networks are not a given, but rather a virtue which the Nande must fight to produce, sustain, and extend. Trading activities in Butembo assume the form of a fierce intra-ethnic competition; it looks like a veritable rat race. However, for these transactions to occur, an intricate matrix of social relations based on trust was needed – even as a precondition for communicating with the world beyond the Kivu region. Rather than providing

a basis for insider solidarity and internal uniformity, intra-ethnic competition seems to facilitate diverse transnational links, which in turn reconstituted the meaning of Nande locality and ethnicity and have produced and sustained the Nande community in the Butembo area in extraordinary ways.

As far as Nande trading networks are concerned, the present study has drawn, among others, two main conclusions: one related to social networks and the other on statehood in Africa in general.

Commercial Networking in the Nande Region

This book has also shown that the dynamics of Nande trading is a result of the structures of their social relations rather than a product of the presumed existence of any essential (or normative) Nande cultural disposition. In order to manage risks, to confront the global trading community, Nande traders have had, simultaneously, to maintain trust among network members and seek the protection of outside groups and organisations in order to preserve and expand their enterprises. Mbohga (1975), Nelson (1996) and Mirembe (2005) attribute the origin of Nande commercial dynamism to the Protestant work ethic inspired by the American Baptist missionaries in and around Butembo from 1920 to 1960. While acknowledging the vital role of Protestant work ethic introduced by the Baptist missionaries, including the formation of particular social relations, this study argues that Nande trading networks are the product of a particular historical dynamism of the North Kivu region in the history of the DRC. The Nande's ethnic particularity congealed over time and in relation to particular historical, sociopolitical, and economic circumstances in the DRC. In other words, Nande trust networks are not the result of some kind of essential and eternal cultural genius of the Nande, but rather of a specific sociopolitical history that literally produces them as Nande and contributes to the reification of that collective identity as a new ethnicity.

By introducing productive enterprises as a method of capital accumulation, and by facilitating cross-border journeys, Baptist missionaries did contribute to the material and practical emergence of the most influential traders in Butembo. However, Nande commercial success is ultimately to be attributed not merely to their religious ethos, but rather to their ability to combine local and regional networks – forms of social organisation – based on social relations of trust. Nande trader networks could seem to embody a communal response to the withdrawal of the state and the predatory behaviour of the Mobutist state system, the legitimacy of which was systematically being undermined by cross-border smuggling and fraud. However, what is more crucial to emphasise here is not a mere response but rather a veritable production of something new, autonomous of the central state. Nande people have dismissed altogether the ruined state

services; inhabitants of Butembo refer to the traders for leadership in social as well as economic matters, such as the litigation and business successions transforming traders into local “village lords” (Raeymaekers 2007:184). By early 1990, with the complete disintegration of the Zairian economy, some of the revenue of the transnational trade had begun to trickle down to the Nande’s producing hinterland. Local peasants started setting up private credit institutions and rotating credit groups, and women slowly started to assume better positions within their households as providers of economic revenue (Vwakyanakazi 1982).

The economic redistribution generated by this kind of social solidarity is by and large a sign of both the success as well as limitations of an informal economy. It produces a new generation of small-scale traders who travel to mining areas in Ituri and the Kivus. It also provides a sort of social insurance against loss or misfortune; traders have come to the rescue of their peers in bad financial predicaments. But the economic situation also remains in jeopardy of reproducing parasitic behaviour from social peers or predatory state officials, who partly remove the possibility of accumulation (Mirembe 2002).

In order to maintain and expand their business, traders of the informal economy, in most weak African states, have consistently sought to ensure the protection of the official state framework they claimed to resist. Money changers in Kinshasa and other informal networks need to protect their business (de Villers et al. 2002; Trefon 2004). Nande trade networks used to buy protection from corrupted state officials before resorting to militias when the state had completely disintegrated. Today, there is still a great complicity between Nande informal traders and the remaining formal state organisation in terms of political and to some extent military protection.

In conclusion, the distinctive organisation of their social relationships has remained paramount for the development of Nande traders’ trust networks. The Nande’s cultural or normative (Protestant) dispositions are really secondary, at best.

What State are we Speaking of?

This study poses a question regarding the effectiveness of state sovereignty and depicts multiple layers of rival sovereignties that coexist. Klute and van Trotha (2004) postulate a concept of para-sovereignty defined as a situation in which “social and political centres of power and relevant non-government groups have taken over part of the rights of sovereignty of the central authority;” it is a version of usurpation – an expropriation – of state sovereignty by groups and organisations that are in direct competition with the state and its administration, and it occurs by means of an informal decentralisation and privatisation. But even this perspective tends to treat sovereignty as, first and foremost, the preserve of the state.

The Nande case shows that rather than a clear division between the old and the new, or between the formal and informal, the emerging para-sovereignty confirms a standoff between state and non-state forms of governance that makes these institutions seem to hang in constant limbo while, in fact, cannibalising one another in continuous struggle. This is inconceivable from the conventional western perspective of a Weberian ideal of statehood. However, it makes sense from the perspective of evolving social realities rooted in postcolonial contexts, where the state's sovereignty has been beleaguered, at best. The Nande case shows us that, contrary to the ideas conveyed by literature on "state collapse" (Zartman 1995), there is always some degree of political and economic organisation in apparently anarchic situations. New forms of social regulation and governance practices are crucial to the outcome of ongoing state formation processes. Nande transnational networks show that people constantly adapt and accommodate themselves, improving and innovating as they establish new ways of producing and sustaining community, while coping with conflict and uncertainty. From this perspective, the collapse of government does not necessarily mean the collapse of governance, which could be provided by non-state actors.

State Failure or Concept Failure?

This study has undertaken a deconstruction of the discourse of state failure or state collapse. It understands state failure or state collapse as a hegemonic discourse whose assumptions reveal, more than anything else, the way Africa is being constructed as the object of someone else's power. So-called "state collapse" in Africa is taken to refer to a situation where the structure, authority, law and political order of the state have fallen apart and must be reconstructed in some form, old or new (Zartman 1995:1). A curious consequence of this view on state collapse, however, is that academic analysis is directed primarily at possibilities for post-collapse intervention, presumably from the outside. Like most African weak states, the Congo's state collapse was portrayed primarily as a decline of government, and the reaffirmation of these state structures was simultaneously seen as *sine qua non* for re-establishing authority as such and, presumably, resuscitating society at large.

The principal reason for this way of proceeding is that in a weak society, it is presumed, there is a general inability to refill the institutional gaps left by a withering government. In such situations, the organisation and allocation of political assets easily falls into the hands of warlords and gang leaders, who will make use of this institutional gap to renegotiate the contract that binds citizens to the state (Zartman 1995:7; Baker and Ausink 1996; Gros 1996; Dorff 1996). Thus, state failure, society failure, and state collapse are placed on a type of development continuum, where one stage of failure logically leads to another.

The present study has mobilised ethnography to illuminate what is remarkable, innovative, resilient, and creative about Nande transnational networks and their transnational production of local community, without relinquishing its critical vantage. It also exposes how this particular formulation of transnationalism and ethnic insularity colludes with an internecine (even genocidal) violence in the very near periphery of its seemingly remote ethnic homeland in the distant borderland of a collapsed state. This means that horrendous civil wars of the sort that has racked the DRC may be opportunities for the cynical restructuring of global capital accumulation in places where what matters to global capital is effective access to valuable resources and what is utterly expendable is the life and limb of the human beings who inhabit that particular corner of the planet.

Finally, this book has shown that in a chaotic situation or in a situation of protracted and proliferating violence, it is always possible to construct a sense of political and economic order, relying on agencies of governance other than the state. Indeed, new kinds of regulations and governance practices, which have emerged from the retreat of state power, are shaping the ongoing postcolonial state formation. In the case of Butembo, the administration of security in the absence of the DRC state has been overseen by the militias who act as junior partners to the traders. This is a microcosm of what happens on the global scale when capitalism goes hand in hand with various forms of military might. At the local level, the military side may be called *May May*, as in the Kivu, or may be called Blackwater military contractors, as elsewhere, but at the global level, this relation of coercive violence is figured as politics, and the state is its normative form.

Janet McGaffey's work shows us how during the 1980s and the 1990s Nande traders were contrasted with dominant political elite. The latter's *modus operandi* was one of predation and destruction of national wealth. Nande traders built their wealth by accumulation and work, first by trading agricultural produce from the fertile lands for products needed for local consumption. Building on McGaffey's anthropological tradition, the present study brought it a step further by showing how these Nande traders adapted to ever changing conditions even in cases of extreme violence and civil war, where trading was even more difficult to pursue than under the predatory regime of Mobutu. The Nande form of social organisation was therefore concomitantly adapted to the continued disintegration of the Congolese State.

The study has shown that as form of social arrangement and government, the Weberian modern state form is not unique; it is one form amongst others. An adequate form of social organisation is the one which responds to the reality on the ground. Statehood is a relative term, and dependent on the specificities of the struggles on the ground.

This is indeed an invitation to rethink the ways scholars of post-colonial African societies have imagined and written about the state and state failure, the performances of ethnicity and kinship in the transnational production of social relations, war and the “business” of war, and the relationships between apparently contradictory spheres of “legality” and “illegality.” The Nande case has shown that it is at the frontiers of both the “legal” and the “illegal” that the new DRC state (re-)formation is being deconstructed, re-constructed and shaped.

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Within the context of the absence of effective state sovereignty and the presence of numerous armed struggles for power, Nande traders have managed to build and protect self-sustaining, prosperous, transnational economic enterprises in eastern Congo.

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In the midst of abundant anti-ethnic literature on African studies, this study posits that there may be a renewed usefulness and necessity in theorizing the salience and continuing production of ‘ethnic’ differences in a manner that challenges the notion of ethnicity as merely a devious and divisive invention of colonialism that must simply be overcome.

Patience Kabamba has degrees in philosophy from Paris and Leuven, in Economic Development from the University of Kwazulu-Natal in Durban, and in cultural anthropology from Columbia University. He has taught at Emory University (post-doc), University of Notre Dame (fellow), University of Johannesburg and now teaches international studies at Marymount Manhattan College. He has intensive ethnographic experience of emergent social formations when states disintegrate in war-torn Africa: in DRC, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. His theoretical interests include the dynamics of conflict, new state formations, transnational trade networks, ethnicity and global political and economic governance.

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